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## TODAY IN STRIPES

Abby, Annie's Mailbox.....	26
American Roundup.....	20-21
Classified.....	27-29
Comics.....	24-26
Crossword.....	25
Faces.....	17
Horoscope.....	22
Letters.....	24
Opinion.....	23
Sports.....	31-40
TV listings.....	19
Weather.....	30
Your Money.....	18

# News Tracker ... What's new with old news

## States

**Immigrant smuggling trial:** Two men were convicted for their roles in a human smuggling attempt that ended in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants crammed in a sweltering tractor-trailer, and could face life in prison.

Victor Jesus Rodriguez and Fredy Giovanni Garcia-Tobar were found guilty of the most serious charge, conspiracy, and 19 counts of aiding in the transport of immigrants that results in death.

**Cassini spacecraft probe:** A probe once attached to the international Cassini spacecraft was on its own Saturday for the first time, headed on a slow, tumbling course into the hazy atmosphere of Saturn's planet-size moon Titan.

The European Space Agency's Huygens probe carried instruments that may reveal more about the moon's chemistry and whether Titan actually has lakes or seas of liquid methane and ethane that have been theorized by scientists.

**Catholic clergy abuse:** A Roman Catholic religious order has agreed to pay \$6.3 million to settle lawsuits brought by three former students who were sexually abused by counselors and teachers at an elite private school in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The largest of the three settlements, at \$4 million, would be one of the biggest in California for a plaintiff in a clergy sexual abuse case, attorneys and victims advocates said Friday.

The abuse occurred when the plaintiffs, now in their 30s and 40s, attended the Concord school operated by the Christian Brothers religious order.

## World

**Sudan peace agreement:** The Sudanese government and the main southern rebel group, Sudan People's Liberation Army, will sign a peace agreement Jan. 10 in Kenya to end more than 20 years of civil war, a senior government official said Saturday.

Guthrie el-Mahdi, political adviser to President Omar el-Bashir, told the official Sudan Media Center that the government and SPLA negotiators decided to continue their talks during the Christmas and the New Year holidays and that the signing ceremony will be publicly celebrated both in Sudan's north and south.

On Thursday, President Bush signed legislation that authorizes financial support to help Sudanese victims of violence and as an



**Grounded freighter:** The two halves of the Selendang Ayu, a 738-foot freighter that ran aground Dec. 8, sit offshore of Unalaska Island, Ala. Commercial divers spent hours Friday in a futile search for the black box of a Coast Guard helicopter that crashed into the Bering Sea while trying to rescue the crew of the grounded Malaysian freighter.

The divers planned another recovery attempt at the next break in the weather, expected Tuesday. The helicopter crashed with 10 people on board. Four were rescued by another helicopter, but six crewmembers were lost at sea and are presumed dead.

incentive for reaching a final peace agreement with SPLA. The bill also encourages Bush to impose sanctions on Sudan's government if violence continues in Darfur or the peace talks collapse.

**Afghan politics:** The runner-up to Hamid Karzai in historic presidential elections congratulated the Afghan leader on Saturday on the formation of his Cabinet, and said he is in the process of forming an opposition political party.

Yunus Qanouni said he had deep respect for the Cabinet ministers and for Karzai himself — but that he felt he could best serve the nation by becoming a leading opposition figure. He said he would call the party New Afghanistan, and that it would be created in the coming weeks.

Qanouni, an ethnic Tajik who was a senior figure in the northern alliance and later served as Karzai's interior and education

minister, got 16 percent of the vote in October elections.

**International space station:** An unmanned Russian cargo spaceship on a vital supply mission prepared Saturday to dock at the international space station, carrying food for the two-member U.S.-Russian crew, who have been forced to ration their dwindling supplies.

The Progress M-51 lifted off Friday from the Baikonur cosmodrome in the steppe of Kazakhstan and was set to moor at the station at 2:31 a.m. Moscow time Sunday.

**Afghan fighting:** Suspected Taliban rebels attacked a government office in southern Afghanistan, prompting a firefight that left one soldier and two militants dead, the governor said on Saturday. In other violence, an army truck driver was killed when rebels ambushed his convoy.

About 40 Taliban ambushed a government office in the Ats Ghar district of southern Zabul province on Thursday, said Gov. Khial Mohammed. He said outgunned security forces held the rebels off, killing two of them. One soldier was also killed.

Meanwhile, rebels attacked an Afghan military convoy as it made its way from western Herat province to neighboring Farah, killing one driver and wounding two others, Farah's deputy police Hajib Mohammed Rassoul said on Saturday.

**Musharraf assassination attempt:** A Pakistani soldier has been sentenced to death and another soldier given 10 years imprisonment after they were convicted in an attempt to assassinate President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, an army spokesman said Friday.

Other air force and army personnel are facing similar trials in military courts over last year's bomb attack, believed to have been plotted by a Libyan al-Qaida operative with help from Pakistani Islamic militants, Maj. Gen. Shaikat Sultan said.

**Abductee dispute:** North Korea on Saturday demanded that Tokyo return evidence from Pyongyang's investigation into the North's abductions of Japanese citizens decades ago, after Japan lodged a protest saying the investigation efforts were inadequate, media reports said.

North Korea has admitted to kidnapping 13 Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s, and recently handed over what it claims to be the remains of one of the victims, Megumi Yokota.

However, DNA tests by Japanese experts concluded that the remains were not Yokota's.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Zama TTT



# It's Sapporo Snow Festival Time!

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# Japanese to develop new attack warning

BY CHIYOMI SUMIDA  
Stars and Stripes

Japan's government will develop a siren warning system to alert the nation in case of a ballistic missile attack, Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency announced Monday.

Research on the system is to begin April 1, FDMA was announced.

The system will depend on information transmitted from a U.S. space-based sensor, according to an FDMA official. A ballistic missile entering Japanese territory should trigger sirens installed in local communities, the agency said.

The FDMA spokesman said that detailed plans were yet to be drawn for how people should react and where they can find shelters.

"We will educate the public on how they should react to the sirens and where they should find shelters, such as solid buildings, but detailed plans will come later after the research and development on the system is done next year," he said.

The Japanese government Monday set aside \$2 million in its fiscal 2005 budget for research expenses for the siren network, called Now Cast System.

"Under the Law to Protect Civilians in the event of an armed attack, the FDMA is responsible to warn municipal governments," read a statement the agency released Monday. "Meanwhile, local governments are required to alert residents of an attack through their community wireless system. Especially (when)

warning against a ballistic missile attack, which requires instant response, it is necessary to develop a system to quickly transmit the information to the public.

"We will begin to develop the system in the coming new fiscal year starting in April," said Hiroshi Miyawaki, FDMA's Public Protection Operation Room chief. "It will still be in an experimental stage but if it is proved to be successful, we will gradually introduce the system."

The Now Cast System lets the agency use a communications satellite to activate community wireless systems to set off local sirens, he said, while faxing the warning at the same time to prefectural governments.

Community wireless systems are installed throughout the country

at major cities, areas near U.S. military installations and other important facilities such as power plants. As of December, 66 percent of Japan's approximately 3,100 municipal governments had the community wireless system, he said.

According to the agency's plan, information on firing of a ballistic missile targeted at Japan is to be detected by a U.S. space-based sensor and automatically transmitted to a land-based radar. It then is to be then sent to FDMA's siren command center via the Self-Defense Agency, Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office. The information further will be relayed to a satellite "Super bird," Miyawaki said, which instantaneously is to activate Interface, the automatic communication system that sounds the sirens.

"The system is not necessary only for a missile attack," he said.

"To protect the nation from any imminent danger, warning must be given to the public as quickly as possible," he said, adding that the siren warning system is designed to help the public evacuate to safety.

He said that FDMA has been working on a similar warning system to alert the public of a major earthquake or tsunami.

The route for information flow was slightly different but the system was similar, he said.

"In the experiment of an earthquake, which we conducted in 2003 fiscal year, it took about 20 seconds before sirens went off," he said.

E-mail Chiyomi Sumida at: [sumidac@pstrsides.osd.mil](mailto:sumidac@pstrsides.osd.mil)

# Yokota schedules information fair for retirees

BY VINCE LITTLE  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Yokota officials are staging an information fair Jan. 13 for all U.S. military retirees on the Kanto Plain.

The session is designed to raise awareness about various benefits and quality-of-life issues affecting overseas retirees. It's to begin at 8 a.m. in the Yokota Enlisted Club's main ballroom.

"It'll be one-stop shopping for retirees," said Lt. L. Warren Comer, a 374th Airlift

Wing spokesman. "It's basically designed to provide them insight on what kind of services they have available here at Yokota. Retirees from all branches can attend. They can figure out what they need to do and how they need to do it."

Civilian and military personnel matters, services, legal affairs, finances, vehicle access and medical care are among the specific issues representatives from different base organizations are to cover. Col. Mark Schissler, the 374th Airlift Wing commander, also is scheduled to speak.

Booths are being set up at the informa-

tional fair to put retirees in touch with other organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Affairs.

A free breakfast will be served before the briefings, which are expected to last about two hours.

Comer said retiree informational fairs routinely are conducted at military installations in the United States, particularly in areas with large pockets of former servicemembers. It's being held at Yokota for the first time.

"They're not normally done overseas be-

cause of a lack of services available to retirees," Comer said. "At bases in the U.S., many organizations will get together for these informational fairs. This will be the same thing but on a smaller scale."

Retirees planning to take part in the Yokota event will be required to show proper identification upon entering the base.

Contact Rodney Bradish at DSN 225-8324 or 011-81-31175-58324 for more information about the Retiree Informational Fair.

Those who wish to attend should RSVP by e-mail at: [Yokota.Retact@yokota.af.mil](mailto:Yokota.Retact@yokota.af.mil). E-mail Vince Little at: [little@pstrsides.osd.mil](mailto:little@pstrsides.osd.mil)

# Atsugi cantata tells Christmas story



PHOTOS BY CHAD LORENZANA/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Community members of Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Japan, portray shepherds visiting the baby Jesus during a Christmas cantata held Thursday at Atsugi's Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The musical/dramatic program told the story of Christmas to a packed audience. More than 100 people from the Catholic and Protestant chapel community were involved in the planning and performance of the event.



From left, Don Waters, Chaplain Curtis Schmidtlein and Chief Warrant Officer Ed White sing a traditional Christmas carol in their roles as the Three Wise Men.



Chapel of the Good Shepherd Children's Choir performs during the cantata.

# Rumsfeld surprises troops in Iraq

## DOD secretary: Defeating the insurgency an Iraqi problem

By ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — After a bruising month at home, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld clearly relished his surprise holiday visit with American troops in some of the most dangerous areas of Iraq.

In a Christmas Eve visit, he consoled wounded soldiers in Mosul, told the infantry in Tikrit that democracy requires perseverance, and bucked up battle-weary Marines in Fallujah.

Rumsfeld praised the troops and told them he believes they will defeat the insurgency that threatens the country. He dismissed "the naysayers and the doubters," saying "there have been such doubters 'throughout every conflict in the history of the world.'"

The 12-hour trip came as lawmakers have accused Rumsfeld of appearing indifferent to soldiers and their families. Much of the criticism stemmed from Rumsfeld's visit to Kuwait this month. When a *National Guardsman* asked why the Army had not provided sufficient armor for his unit's vehicles, Rumsfeld said, "You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want or wish to have."

In his Christmas Eve encounters with U.S. military commanders and hundreds of their troops, Rumsfeld heard — and said — little about armor or troop shortages, issues that have hurt many a



U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, on a surprise Christmas Eve visit, talks to Marines and sailors of Bravo Surgical Company, 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, at their base in Fallujah, Iraq, on Friday.

political target in Washington among both Democrats and Republicans.

His main message over a four-city tour was quite different: that the insurgency has staying power and a seemingly endless supply of weapons, and the time has come for ordinary Iraqis to realize that they — not the Americans — will ultimately decide who prevails in this conflict.

Rumsfeld fielded friendly questions. One soldier raised his hand to say that despite well-publicized complaints of some troops over having to stay in the military beyond their enlistment or retirement dates, others accepted the hardship.

At each stop, Rumsfeld spent more time than he usually does to

mingle with individual soldiers and have his picture taken with them. He ate breakfast, lunch and dinner with the troops.

"What's in there?" he asked about a military-issue sandwich before accepting it and sitting down to eat with the troops. At a later food stop in Baghdad, he seemed more certain of his selection: He requested a slice of ham.

Rumsfeld greeted soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division in Tikrit and Marines at their main base outside the city of Fallujah. The scene of intense combat last month. Three Marines were killed in Fallujah just hours before Rumsfeld arrived.

The defense secretary zipped across the country in a Black Hawk helicopter flying at treetop

level and escorted by Apache attack helicopters. He arrived first in Mosul in pre-dawn darkness, visiting with soldiers wounded in Tuesday's apparent suicide attack on a mess tent.

Rumsfeld ended his day in Baghdad, meeting with top American commanders and holding talks with Iraq's interim president, Ghazi al-Yawar, who said Rumsfeld that he shared the Bush administration's optimism about establishing a stable Iraqi democracy.

The Pentagon shrouded Rumsfeld's trip in unusual secrecy out of concern for security.

Just hours after Rumsfeld left Baghdad, a gas tanker truck wired with explosives blew up in the city, killing one person and wounding 19.

## U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, Dec. 24, 2004, at least 1,323 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. That included 1,034 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday. There has not been an update thus far Friday.

The British military has reported 75 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, six; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,185 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 925 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No new deaths reported. The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department.

Killed Tuesday in an attack on a mess hall near Mosul in Iraq:

■ Army Pfc. Lionel Ayro, 22, Jeannette, La.; assigned to the 73rd Engineer Company, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Spc. Jonathan Castrejo, 21, Corvallis, Ore.; assigned to the 73rd Engineer Company, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Spc. Cory M. Hewitt, 26, Stewart, Tenn.; assigned to the 705th Infantry Company, Fort Polk, La.

■ Army Capt. William W. Jacobsen Jr., 31, Charlotte, N.C.; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Robert S. Johnson, 23, Castro Valley, Calif.; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Julian S. Melo, 47, New York; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Staff Maj. Robert D. O'Dell, 38, Manassas, Va.; assigned to the United States Army's 1st Cavalry and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Va.

■ Army Spc. David A. Ruhren, 20, Stafford, Va.; assigned to the 1st Cavalry and Security Command's 276th Engineer Battalion, West Point, Va.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Darren D. Vancorn, 33, Bluefield, W.Va.; assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

# Marines capture senior al-Zarqawi militants

By BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military said Saturday it has captured two senior terrorists linked to Iraq's most feared Islamic militant group as police uncovered more bodies under the rubble after a day after a suicide bomber blew up a gas tanker in an upscale Baghdad district.

The two detainees linked to Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al-Qaida in Iraq network were identified as Saleh Arayagun al-Kahlil and Butuman al-Mohammad Hazem. "Both of these individuals were cell leaders for a local Zarqawi-affiliated terrorist group that is operating" in the western province of Anbar that include the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, U.S. Marines said in a statement.

Al-Zarqawi's group recently changed its name to Al-Qaida in Iraq and pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaida network. It has claimed responsibility for numerous deadly attacks including U.S. troops and government forces.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the gas truck explosion Friday night in the upscale Mansour district near the Libyan and

Moroccan embassies, which killed at least nine people and demolished several houses. Police said it was a suicide attack.

Rescuers on Saturday uncovered seven more bodies under the rubble of one of the shattered houses. At least 14 people were seriously wounded by the blast which struck just hours after U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld left the capital following an unannounced one-day visit to Iraq.

There were no members of the multinational al-Qaida forces among the casualties. There were no injuries inside the embassies.

The Marine statement announcing the arrest of the suspected extremists said al-Zarqawi's cell "kidnapped and executed 11 Iraqi National Guardsmen," carried out car bombings and other attacks in the Ramadi area and "smuggled foreign terrorists into the country."

Violence has escalated across Iraq in the run-up to national elections scheduled for Jan. 30.

While majority Shiites have embraced the polls as a chance to assert their numerical strength, radical elements within the minority Sunni community are leading the campaign to prevent the vote.

In other violence Saturday, a car bomb exploded as a U.S. military convoy was passing through the southern town of Ein al-Nus, killing three Iraqis and wounding two, police said.

Gunmen shot dead Hadeed Abdul-Ghani al-Rubaei, a professor at Baghdad University's medical school.

And a roadside bomb exploded Saturday near the car of the governor of eastern Diyala province, wounding four of his guards, officials said.

Meanwhile, Iraqi police have arrested a group of six men suspected to have organized last week's explosions in the Shiite holy city of Najaf that killed more than 50 people.

More displaced residents of the battered city of Fallujah returned to inspect their devastated homes Saturday.

On Thursday and Friday, a total 1,404 residents returned to their homes in the Andalus district of Fallujah under the supervision of government and U.S. forces, a Marine statement said.



# Army strategist: Occupation plan too little, late

BY THOMAS E. RICKS

The Washington Post

The U.S. military invaded Iraq without a formal plan for occupying and stabilizing the country, and this high-level failure continues to undercut what has been a "medecore" Army effort there, an Army historian and strategist has concluded.

"There was no Phase IV plan" for occupying Iraq after the combat phase, writes Maj. Isaiah Wilson III, who served as an official historian of the campaign and later as a war planner in Iraq. While a variety of government officials had considered the possible situations that would follow a U.S. victory, Wilson writes, no one produced an actual document laying out a strategy to consolidate the victory after major combat operations ended.

"While there may have been 'plans' at the national level, and even within various agencies within the war zone, none of these 'plans' operationalized the problem beyond regime collapse," that is, laid out how U.S. forces would be moved and structured, Wilson writes in an essay that has been delivered at several academic conferences but not published. "There was no adequate operation plan for stability operations and support operations."

Similar criticisms have been made before, but until now they have not been stated so authoritatively and publicly by a military insider positioned to be familiar with top-secret planning. During the period in question, from April to June 2003, Wilson was a researcher for the Army's Operation Iraqi Freedom Study Group.

Then, from July 2003 to March 2004, he was the chief war planner for the 101st Airborne Division, which was stationed in northern Iraq.

A copy of Wilson's study as presented in October at Cornell University was obtained by The Washington Post.

As a result of the failure to produce a plan, Wilson asserts, the U.S. military lost the dominant position in Iraq in the summer of 2003 and has been scrambling to recover ever since.

"In the two to three months of ambiguous transition, U.S. forces slowly lost the momentum and the initiative ... gained over an off-balanced enemy," he writes. "The United States, its Army and its coalition of the willing have been playing catch-up ever since."

It was only in November 2003, seven months after the fall of Baghdad, that U.S. occupation authorities produced a formal "Phase IV" plan for stability operations, Wilson reports. Phase I covers preparation for combat, followed by initial operations, Phase II, and combat, Phase III. Post-combat operations are called Phase IV.

Many in the Army have blamed Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other top Pentagon officials for the unexpectedly difficult occupation of Iraq, but Wilson reserves his toughest criticism for Army commanders who, he concludes, failed to grasp the strategic situation in Iraq and so did not plan properly for victory. He concludes that those who planned the war suffered from "stunted" learning and a reluctance to adapt.

## Driving downfield



JEREMY A. CLAWSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Staff. Andy Grentz, of the 209th Military Police Company with the Lashkar Gah Provincial Reconstruction Team, goes after the ball during a recent soccer game against local players in Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan. U.S. civil affairs soldiers with the PRT have provided \$16,000 to supply not only 25 soccer teams with balls, nets and cleats, but also 25 volleyball teams and 25 cricket teams.

# Aziz denies any corruption in U.N. oil-for-food program

BY OMAR SINAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Tariq Aziz, a jailed former senior aide to Saddam Hussein, wants to write a book about Saddam but rejected reports that he will testify against the former dictator, his lawyer said Friday. Aziz also denied there was any corruption in the U.N.-run oil-for-food program.

The lawyer, Bader Izzat Aref, said he met Aziz — Iraq's former deputy prime minister and foreign minister — for five hours Thursday in a small room in an area near Baghdad with a member of the U.S. military present.

Aref quoted Aziz as saying he denied "any wrongdoings related to the oil-for-food program" that allowed Iraq to sell oil to buy food and medicine for its people suffering under U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990.

U.N. officials have been accused of corruption in the oil-for-food program that started in 1996. A report in October by U.S. arms inspector Charles Du-

eller said Saddam was able to "subvert" the \$60 billion program to generate an estimated \$1.7 billion in revenue outside U.N. control from 1997 to 2003.

The report alleged that Iraq tried to manipulate foreign governments by awarding contracts and bribes to foreign companies and political figures in countries who showed support for ending sanctions, in particular U.N. Security Council members Russia, France and China. It alleged, among other things, that Aziz paid a cash bribe of up to \$20 million to a female colonel in the Russian Intelligence Service.

The corruption allegations have further strained relations between the United Nations and Washington. The Iraqi media has speculated that Aziz could agree to testify against Saddam and other top leaders as part of a plea bargain. But Aref said that would not happen.

"I am not ready to testify against President Saddam Hussein. I will not say anything that

contradicts with my conscience and honor," Aziz said a handwritten statement that Aref showed to an Associated Press reporter.

"I am not ready to speak about Saddam Hussein now, but I will when I become a free person. I will write a book about him because I am not ready to testify in front of any court or any judge," Aref quoted Aziz as saying. "It is a conspiracy. When the Americans want us dead, they will hand us over to Iraqis and ... they will kill us. The orders will be American but the hands that carry it out will be Iraqi."

Aref said Aziz told him he meets the other 10 top Baath Party officials, excluding Saddam, during a three-hour break every day when they can walk in the open air or have a shower. They are only allowed three showers a week, Aziz said.

It was the first meeting between Aziz and his lawyer since he was captured by U.S. troops 20 months ago. The meeting came shortly before Aziz is expected to be interrogated by an investigative judge.

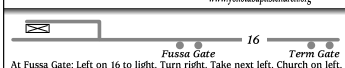
## Yokota Baptist Church

Pastor Warren Webster

日本語もあります YBC services are interpreted in Japanese

REACHING THE MILITARY AND JAPAN, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Yokota Christian Academy M-F		Friday	
Sunday		Awana Club	1900
Early Service	0830	Monthly	
Sunday School	1000	Mens Prayer Breakfast	1st Sat
Morning Service	1100	Ladies Meeting	1st Sat
Evening Service	1800		
Monday		Dec 31 2100-2400 New Years Eve: Meal, Preaching, "Time-Change Movie", Games	
Faith Bible Institute	1830	CH _CH	
Tuesday		What is missing?	
Soul Winning & Visitation	1830	4025-52-7254	
Wednesday		www.yokotabaptistchurch.org	
Evening Service & Prayer Mtg	1900		
Patch & Pee Wee Clubs	1900		



At Fussa Gate: Left on 16 to light. Turn right. Take next left. Church on left.

## Powell urged Bush to beef up forces

WASHINGTON — As insurgents stepped up their pressure, Secretary of State Colin Powell advised President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in November that Iraqi security forces should be increased to counter attacks in the embattled Sunni Triangle.

Powell, a former four-star general with long experience as an Army infantry officer in Vietnam and Germany, emphasized a need for increased training of Iraqis during the meeting at the White House

Nov. 12, a senior U.S. official said Friday.

Blair's visit, which followed the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, was centered mostly on opportunities for peacekeeping in the Middle East that the prime minister and other European leaders saw in Arafat's passing.

But Bush and Blair also spent some time talking about Iraq and the difficult security problems that followed the war that removed President Saddam Hussein and his regime.

From The Associated Press

# Rebuilding Iraq through the legal system

## Officials: Iraqi court trials a major step

BY JOSEPH GIORONDO  
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — In late September, Staff Sgt. Ronald Lewis, Sgt. Shaun Thomas and other soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment raided a compound south of Fallujah. Inside, they found a cache of illegal weapons, ammunition, piles of cash and stacks of propaganda.

On Dec. 19 in a Baghdad courtroom, before an Iraqi judge, Lewis and Thomas testified in the preliminary hearing of the suspect they detained that day.

U.S. military officials say prosecuting insurgents and other criminals in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq is a major step in rebuilding the Iraqi legal system. It is an increasingly effective tool to show soldiers that the courts they detain will be off the streets and be stopped from organizing future attacks.

"Establishing the rule of law is the cornerstone of a free and democratic society," said Lt. Col. Bernard McLaughlin, the Multi-National Force Iraq deputy liaison to the court.

Iraq's legal code was written by the



JOSEPH GIORONDO/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Scott Ramsey from Washington, D.C., conducts a security briefing before escorting the U.S. military lawyers working with the Central Criminal Court of Iraq in Baghdad.

French, Louisiana, with its French roots, has the legal system most similar to the Iraqi Penal Code of 1969, which was largely abandoned under Saddam Hussein.

In recent weeks, U.S. military officials at the central court have been teaching front-line troops how to work within the system. They give presentations on how to collect

and preserve evidence; they also help soldiers from the front lines get to Baghdad to testify in court.

"If the tactical scene allows you to do it, tell everyone to take pictures. If you pop a guy in a house, take pictures of the detainee in the house with the weapons," McLaughlin told visiting soldiers from the judge advo-

cate general and military intelligence units of the 25th Brigade Combat Team.

The central Court has heard 900 cases. U.S. military officials have brought 200 of those cases, McLaughlin said. Two weeks ago, McLaughlin and his staff — made up of 27 servicemembers from all branches — won what they call a landmark case.

For the first time, an Iraqi man was convicted of murdering a U.S. servicemember. Alaa Sartell Khthee, 28, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for shooting to death Lt. Kylan Jones-Huffman in an August 2003 Baghdad marketplace ambush.

The goal of the central court, McLaughlin said, is to have four trials and four investigative hearings each day.

Sentences range from six months to 30 years, with the average time served being two to three years in one of Iraq's 27 prisons, officials said. The average turnaround time from arrest to trial is three to four months, but officials are telling line units they will fast-track important cases that can set a countrywide example.

Court is held six days a week at Saddam's former museum of antiquities in downtown Baghdad. To get there, McLaughlin and the other military lawyers must leave the relative safety of the International Zone. For security, they alter their routes and the timing everyday and ride with a special Air Force protective detail.

E-mail: joseph.giorondo@starsandstripes.osd.mil



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PHOTOS BY MARIA J. BARE/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Above: Late-night talk show host David Letterman signs a T-shirt for a U.S. Army soldier deployed to Tallil Air Base, Iraq, before boarding a C-130 transport aircraft. Letterman hosted a Christmas Eve show for U.S. troops, marking the third consecutive year he's spent entertaining military personnel during the holiday season. Right: Letterman greets troops deployed to Tallil.



# Letterman's a scream for U.S. troops

The Associated Press

David Letterman brought his late-night show to Marines serving in Iraq on Friday, loosening up the Camp Taqaddum crowd with the line, "Anybody here from out of town?"

Letterman brought along musical director Paul Shaffer, stage manager Biff Henderson, comedian Tim Dreesen and the band Off the Wall.

When hands flew in the air in response to requests for a volunteer to help deliver the opening monologue, he asked: "Isn't that how you get here?"

With the help of cue cards held by an Army soldier, Letterman ran off a series of crowd-pleasers:

"Iraqi elections are in January. Hurry up and pick somebody so we can get the hell out of here." And: "If I wanted to face insurgents, I would've spent Christmas with my relatives."

Letterman has repeatedly featured Marines on "The Late Show."

"Paul and I were in Afghanistan three years ago, and last year we were in Baghdad," Letterman told the crowd. "We wouldn't want it any other way. We're sorry we keep having to come back. If you ever come to New York City, come see us and we'll treat you like big shots."

The Marines, most of who have been deployed since last summer, welcomed the visit.



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## IN THE WORLD

## Ruling muddles Ukraine election

BY YURAS KARMANAU

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's Constitutional Court ruled Saturday that parts of recent legislation restricting the voting rights of homebound people violate the country's constitution, clouding the presidential runoff vote one day before ballots were to be cast.

The decision by Ukraine's highest court won't delay Sunday's vote but creates a headache for the Central Election Commission, which is required by the law to implement the ruling but has less than 24 hours to do so.

"We will fulfill the decision of the Constitutional Court," said commission chief Yaroslav Danyukovych. "We don't have another alternative. The vote must be held."

Supporters of opposition presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko pushed for the restrictions on voting at home, saying they are necessary to prevent a repeat of the vote fraud that marred the Nov. 21 presidential runoff.

Ukraine's Supreme Court invalidated the results of November's vote, canceling the victory of Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and ordering Sunday's new balloting.

The Constitutional Court said in its ruling Saturday that the restrictions allowing only people with certain disabilities to vote at home were unconstitutional and must be lifted immediately.

The court ruled that all those who are unable to get themselves to polling stations because of a disability or ill health must be allowed to vote at home.

The move could benefit Yanukovich, who pushed for the restrictions to be lifted, saying they would deprive millions of their right to vote.

Marina Stavnichuk, the deputy head of the Central Election Commission, told Associated Press Television News that the court's ruling "will remove doubt as to the legitimacy of the rerun."

She also said allowing the disabled to vote at home is "normal and humane from the society's point of view."

The ruling does not affect other newly adopted restrictions on absentee balloting, which the opposition and Western observers said became one of the main reasons for rampant fraud in last month's runoff.

Nestor Shufrych, a lawmaker and Yanukovich ally, said the court's ruling would affect about 3 million people.

## Abbas begins bid to lead Palestinians

BY RAVI NESSMAN

The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Cloaking himself in Yasser Arafat's legacy, interim Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas opened his campaign for president Saturday with a pledge to fulfill Palestinian dreams of statehood.

Abbas, the front-runner in the Jan. 9 election, called on Israel to end its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem — areas that Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast War. He said he favors a negotiated settlement and promised to respect the rights of Palestinian refugees.

Israel and the Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as their capital.

"We are choosing the path of peace and negotiation," Abbas added. "If there is no peace here, there will be no peace in the Mid-

die East or the rest of the world." Abbas, who faces six opponents

in the presidential vote, is the candidate of the late Arafat's ruling Fatah movement. He repeatedly made clear he intends to present himself as the late Palestinian leader's heir, despite their often-rocky relationship.

Since Arafat's death Nov. 11, Abbas has sought to harness Arafat's popularity to build support.

Abbas' rally began with a moment of silence for Arafat and he sprinkled his speech with refer-

ences to the late leader.

Abbas also appeared alongside Arafat in campaign posters and advertisements that ran prominently in Palestinian newspapers Saturday. "On your path, we will achieve the Palestinian dream," the ads say.

In his speech, Abbas reiterated previous promises to hold parliamentary elections in the first half of 2005, shortly after the January presidential race.

The militant group Hamas welcomed Abbas' call for elections, but urged him to follow through on the promise.

Hamas, which is popular at the local level, made a surprisingly strong showing in municipal elections this week, and could be poised to do well in the legislative vote as well. The group is boycotting the presidential vote.

As the campaign kicked off, Pal-

estian newspapers were full of advertisements from presidential hopefuls. Human-rights worker Mustafa Barghouti, who is running a distant second to Abbas in opinion polls, appeared on the front page of the al-Ayam daily and had billboard ads throughout the West Bank.

"Put the cause in safe hands," the candidate says in one ad, a picture of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock mosque in the background.

Late Friday, Abbas traveled to the West Bank town of Bethlehem to join Christmas celebrations, where he was greeted by cheering crowds.

It was the first time a Palestinian leader was permitted to go to the biblical town for Christmas since 2000. Israel prevented Arafat from attending the celebration in recent years, accusing him of advocating violence.

## Iran vows to defend nuclear facilities

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's air force has been ordered to shoot down any unknown or suspicious flying objects in Iran's airspace, an air force spokesman said Saturday, amid state-media reports of sightings of flying objects near Iran's nuclear installations.

"All anti-aircraft units and jet fighters have been ordered to shoot down the flying objects over Iran's airspace," spokesman of the Regular Army Air Force Col. Salim Mahini said.

Flying-object fever has gripped Iran after dozens of reported sightings in the summer and in recent weeks. State-run media has reported sightings of unknown objects flying over parts of Iran where nuclear facilities are located.

"The unidentified flying objects could be

satellites, comets or spying or reconnaissance crafts trying to monitor Iran's nuclear installations," Mahini said.

"Flights of unknown objects in the country's airspace have increased in recent weeks ... [they] have been seen over Bushehr and Isfahan provinces," the daily Resalat reported Saturday. There are nuclear facilities in both provinces.

The timing of the reported increase in sightings, which comes as the United States is urging allies to confront Iran over its nuclear program, has strengthened Iranian public perceptions that the objects are surveillance or hostile aircrafts monitoring Iran.

Iran's Air Force chief, Gen. Karim Ghasemi, was quoted in Iranian newspapers Saturday as saying that Iran was fully prepared to defend any threat to its nuclear installations.

"We have arranged plans to defend nuclear facilities from any threat. Iran's Air Force is watchful and prepared to carry out its responsibilities," Ghasemi was quoted as saying.

The daily Resalat had reported that "shining objects" in the sky were seen near Natanz where Iran's uranium enrichment plant is located — and one had exploded, causing "concern and panic in the region."

According to Mahini, Iran's pilot training center in Tehran will organize a two-day scientific conference in March to shed more light on the flying objects. The conference is scheduled for March 8-9.

Iran, labeled a member of the "axis of evil" by President Bush, is accused by the United States of developing a clandestine nuclear weapons program.

Iran has denied the U.S. charges, saying its nuclear program is geared toward generating electricity, not nuclear weapons.

## Kim: N. Korea has no plans to invade South

The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea's leader Kim Jong Il has said his communist country has no intention of invading the South, an official North Korean news report said Saturday.

The North's media have often said a second Korean war would not be triggered by North Korean provocation but by an attack from the South. Nonetheless, it's highly unusual for them to state, as they did such a statement to Kim, said South Korea's official news agency, Yonhap, which monitors the North's media.

Greater Leader Kim Jong Il has pointed out that in the South today, there is a fuss over the non-existing threat of invasion from the North. But in reality, the only existing threat of invasion is not from the North but from the South," said North Korea's state-run Pyongyang Radio.

Pyeongyang Radio relayed Kim's comment at the head of its commentary accusing the South

of an arms buildup. Yonhap carried the excerpts of the commentary.

The 1950-53 Korean War started with a North Korean invasion of the South. After three years of fighting between U.N. forces led by the United States and North Korean troops backed by China, the war ended with a truce — not a peace treaty — leaving the divided Korean peninsula technically still in a state of war.

For years, North Korea has said the United States and its "cannon-fodder" South Korean troops plot to invade the North.

It adheres to such rhetoric amid an international standoff over its nuclear weapons programs.

North Korea keeps a 1.1 million-member military, the world's fifth largest, which faces off with South Korea's 650,000 military against the world's most heavily armed border.

About 34,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the South to help guard against the North.

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Relatives of Josue Lopez cry over the coffin in their home in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on Friday. Unknown assailants opened fire on a public bus late Thursday in northern Honduras, killing at least 28 passengers.

## Killings on bus blamed on Honduras gang wars

BY SERGIO DE LEON

The Associated Press

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras — This Central American city began to feel more like a war zone than a city preparing for Christmas a day after suspected gang members wielding assault rifles shot up a public bus, killing 28 people and wounding 14.

Nervous residents tried to finish their Christmas shopping Friday but became terrified and ran for cover when rumors circulated that the "Mara" street gangs were gathering for battle.

"I was buying some shoes when somebody shouted, 'Here come the Maras' and everybody started running," said shopper Norman Moreno, describing a brief midday panic at the city's central plaza.

The panic spread, police cars hurried to the scene, but failed to find the cause of the panic.

The Thursday massacre has made Honduras' anti-crime campaign resemble an open war between street gangs and authorities,

with more than 1,000 soldiers patrolling the outskirts of the city and police searching for the killers.

In a message left on the bus' windshield, the gunmen claimed they were part of a previously unknown revolutionary group opposed to the death penalty, one of the main campaign issues in next year's presidential campaign.

The message also included threats against congressional President Porfirio Lobo Sosa, a death-penalty supporter and one of four contenders for the ruling National Party's 2005 presidential nomination.

Speaking to reporters at the morgue, Lobo Sosa said the attack "just reinforces my view that we have to revive the death penalty," which was abolished in the 1980s.

"This is a desperate act by the criminals in response to our struggle against them, but we will not retreat," President Ricardo Maduro told reporters. "These evil [men] seek to intimidate us and destabilize the country, but they will not be able to."

Assailants cut off the city bus filled with Christmas shoppers, then opened fire on the San Pedro suburb of Chameleón, 125 miles north of the capital, Tegucigalpa.

Six children were among the victims, and bloodied bodies littered the muddy dirt road shortly after the attack.

Some 53 people were aboard the bus; 14 were wounded and being treated at local hospitals, and 11 escaped unharmed or with only very slight injuries.

A suspected gang member was later arrested carrying several automatic weapons and driving a car spotted at the scene. The violence was the worst attack in years in a country known for lawlessness and crime.

Maduro, whose own son was kidnapped and killed in 1997, took office in 2001 promising to eliminate the country's prolific gangs, many of which began on the street of Los Angeles in the 1980s and spread to El Salvador and Honduras as members were deported back to those countries.

## Defection brokers in S. Korea's sights

Rights groups attack Seoul policy shift as potentially harmful to those who flee North

BY SANG-HUN CHOE

The Associated Press

SEOUL — South Korea says it plans to crack down on people who demand money for organizing mass defections of North Koreans desperate to leave their isolated Stalinist homeland.

But human rights groups worry that the move is aimed at appeasing the North and China — Pyongyang's last major ally and the way-station for many would-be North Korean defectors.

So-called brokers — often ethnic Koreans in China, South Korean entrepreneurs or North Korean defectors in the South — select would-be defectors from the tens of thousands of North Koreans who flee their hunger-stricken homeland and hide in northeastern China.

They then help the North Koreans bypass into foreign embassies in Beijing and other Asian capitals, in the hopes that they will eventually be allowed to travel to South Korea.

Nearly 83 percent of the 1,850 North Koreans who reached South Korea this year came with the help of brokers who received an average of \$3,800 per person, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

As the trickle of defectors from the communist North has swelled into a torrent in recent years, controversy over the brokers has intensified.

They call themselves human-rights activists helping people escape Pyongyang's totalitarian regime. Experts, however, believe that some brokers are driven by profit rather than humanitarianism.

China calls them human traffickers and sentences them to prison; North Korea accuses South Korea and the United States of "kidnaping" its people.

Some defectors have complained that the brokers charge too much for their services — and in some cases hold their families for ransom. Brokers also put defectors at great risk, and some abandon the escapees after being paid.

On Thursday, Seoul said it was considering preventing those brokers accused of extortion from leaving South Korea.

"The government is telling North Koreans that they don't need to pay the brokers for illegal activities," said Ko Kyong-bin, a senior Unification Ministry official.

Seoul also will drastically cut financial assistance paid to defectors next year, from \$26,600 to \$9,500 per person. That aid is often used to pay off the brokers — and to smuggle more relatives from the North.

Rim Young Son, a North Korean who escaped to South Korea in 1993, admitted charging defectors, but he said the money barely covered his costs, which included bribes to North Korean border guards.

"Some brokers milk their victim's entire financial aid from the government," Rim said. "They hold the victim's North Korean family hostage in China and blackmail him for more money. They give a bad name to people like us."

Human rights groups accuse Seoul of being unsupportive of the defectors and too quick of establishing relations with China and North Korea.

"We believe that extortion should be eliminated," said Hee-yeon, head of the Seoul-based Civil Coalition for Human Rights of the Kidnaped and Defectors from North Korea. "But we fear that the government may have political motives and seek to dampen the activities of human rights groups who help North Korean refugees."

## China: Bill about Taiwan due to 'splittist activities'

BY JOE McDONALD

The Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese lawmakers began considering a proposed anti-secession law on Saturday that Beijing says is aimed at pushing Taiwan to unite with the mainland. The self-ruled island contends the law could serve as a pretext for a military attack.

The government hasn't released any details of the law. But the Foreign Ministry says it is aimed at "containing Taiwan's splittist activities" — a reference to Beijing's claim that Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949, is trying to declare formal independence.

Though it would be largely symbolic, the law apparently is meant as a warning in response to what Beijing says are steps by Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian to pursue independence through a

proposed constitutional revision and other legal steps.

Beijing claims Taiwan as its territory and has threatened to attack if it declares formal independence. The Chinese military has hundreds of missiles aimed at the island and regularly holds drills that appear to be practice for an invasion.

Leaders of the National People's Congress took up the anti-secession law at a meeting that runs through Wednesday, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Earlier reports said the full legislature might pass the law during its annual session in March.

Following China's announcement of the proposed anti-secession law last week, the United States appealed to both sides to resume dialogue and not "unilaterally change the status quo." Washington is Taiwan's main ally and arms supplier and could be drawn in to help defend the island in a conflict with China.

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# Christmas celebrated with caution, fervor



French urban climber Alain Robert, aka the French Spiderman, scales the Taipei 101 building, the tallest building in the world, Saturday in Taiwan. Robert reached the top of the 101-story building in 3.5 hours.

## Some put more nontraditional spin on holiday

BY CATHERINE MCALOON  
The Associated Press

LONDON — Christians around the world celebrated Christmas Saturday with Pope John Paul II leading prayers for peace and a more tranquil future, as pilgrims flocked to Bethlehem, and Iraqis stayed away from church amid fears of bomb attacks.

In other corners of the globe, families gathered at home, revelers took their parties to the streets — and in Australia, to the beach.

In Bethlehem, a new thaw in Israeli-Palestinian relations drew several thousand more pilgrims to the traditional birthplace of Jesus, but numbers were well below those of the 1990s.

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, the senior Roman Catholic official in the Holy Land, called on Israelis and Palestinians to out violence behind them. Interim Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas attended the service — in a change from previous years, when Israel prevented the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat from going to Christmas celebrations out of fears that he would advocate violence.

Christians in other areas of the world were cautious as they attended religious services.

In Iraq, only a few Christians



AP photos

Andy Orr, right, and Anthony Moyle of Dublin, Ireland, attempt to ride the waves on Sydney's Bondi Beach on Saturday. Hundreds of travelers flock to Bondi Beach every year to celebrate Christmas.

showed up to celebrate Mass in Baghdad's churches because of fears Islamic militants could launch attacks.

In Indonesia, Christians celebrated Christmas amid warnings that terrorists linked to al-Qaida planned attacks in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The Christian minorities in Muslim-majority Pakistan and predominantly Buddhist Sri Lanka, where churches have come under attack, also celebrated with police on alert. Authorities also guarded churches in Muslim-dominated Bangladesh. No trouble was reported.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II spoke to her country's troops, who tuned into a special pre-recorded message from the monarch, broadcast on the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

The queen praised the courage and commitment of troops and told them she was proud of their efforts in hotspots around the world.

"The varied tasks you take on in all parts of the world may be changing, but what remains the same is the spirit, good humor, courage and commitment you show every day, often in the most arduous conditions," she said.

SEE CHRISTMAS ON PAGE 11

# Pope offers annual Christmas Day message to world

## Pontiff shares hope for end to violence

BY FRANCES D'EMILIO  
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II shared his fears about Iraq, Sudan and other hot spots and expressed his hopes in a Christmas message Saturday that peace-building efforts will bring the world a more tranquil future.

Shielded by a canopy from bone-chilling drizzle, the pontiff greeted thousands of Romans, tourists and pilgrims who turned out at noon in St. Peter's Square to hear his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" (Latin for "to the city and to the world") message and holiday wishes in dozens of languages.

Children screamed in delight and adults cheered and waved flags as the pope, in gold-colored robes, was driven into the square in his white popemobile.

"Babe of Bethlehem, Prophet of peace, encourage attempts to promote dialogue and reconciliation, sustain the efforts to build peace, which hesitantly, yet not without hope, are being made to bring about a more tranquil present and future for so many of our brothers and sisters of the



In a Christmas Eve message of peace, Pope John Paul II lights a candle outside his darkened studio window overlooking St. Peter's square at the Vatican on Friday.

world," John Paul said, slowly pronouncing each word and often pausing to catch his breath.

"I think of Africa, of the tragedy of Darfur in Sudan, of the Ivory Coast and of the Great Lakes Region," John Paul said of those conflict areas.

"With great apprehension I follow the situation in Iraq. And how can I fail to look with anxious concern, but also with invincible confidence, toward that Land of which you are a son?" the pontiff

said in reference to the Holy Land.

With a life-size Nativity Scene yards away in the square, John Paul laced his message with images of Baby Jesus.

"Before the crib where you lie helpless, let there be an end to the spread of violence in its many forms, the source of untold suffering," John Paul prayed.

"Let there be an end to the numerous situations of unrest which risk degenerating into open con-

flict; let there arise a firm will to seek peaceful solutions, respectful of the legitimate aspirations of individuals and peoples," the pontiff said.

"Everywhere peace is needed! You, Prince of true peace, help us to understand that the only way to build peace is to flee in horror from evil, and to pursue goodness with courage and perseverance," John Paul said.

Shouts of glee went up from the crowd when pilgrims heard the

pope read out holiday greetings in their language. The multilingual pope pronounced wishes of peace and good cheer in 62 languages, including Esperanto, Latin and his native Polish. Determined to finish the list, John Paul took deep breaths before each new language, handing off the completed pages to aides.

Compared to "Urbi et Orbi" messages of his early years in the papacy, John Paul's prayer this year was much shorter. Parkinson's disease has made it difficult for the 84-year-old pontiff to speak.

Several years ago, the pope, deferring to ailments, stopped celebrating Christmas Day Mass for the public in the morning.

Hours earlier he celebrated midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, where he held up well, reading his homily and smiling warmly as he greeted children, one by one, who, dressed in native costume, brought gifts to the pontiff.

The service in the altar-staircase basilica included prayers that world leaders dedicate themselves to peace and that Christians, Muslims and Jews achieve a peaceful coexistence in the Holy Land.

# Mideast thaw brings hope to Bethlehem

BY RAVI NESSMAN  
The Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, West Bank — Bethlehem residents wrapped in hats and scarves cleaned up their town Saturday with renewed hope after celebrating the first cheerful Christmas Eve in four years.

An emerging thaw in Israeli-Palestinian relations drew several thousand pilgrims to the traditional birthplace of Jesus on Christmas Eve.

Although crowds were far smaller than during the town's heyday in the mid-1990s, they also were bigger than in the past four years when fighting, military curfews and general gloom kept visitors away.

Early Christmas morning, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, the senior Roman Catholic official in the Holy Land, led Christmas Day mass.

Sabbah led a small procession to the front of St. Catherine's Church — adjacent to the Church of the Nativity, which is believed to be built on the grotto where Jesus was born — while worshippers sat bundled in the stone structure listening to the mass.

Just outside the church in Manger Square, a handful of Asian tourists milled around in the rain, watching as residents cleaned up the stone-paved area that had been packed with hundreds of revelers on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve, St. Catherine's Church was so crowded for Midnight mass that some worshippers were forced to sit on the floor. Others gathered outside in the square, but under a steady rain, their numbers thinned out as the evening progressed.

With interim Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and other dignitaries looking on from the front row, Sabbah called on Israelis and Palestinians to put the violence of the past behind them.

"Our situation continues to be a situation of conflict, violence, insecurity, fear, military occupation, the wall of separation, of imprisoned cities and demolitions," he said.

"Palestine and Israel must con-

quer the evil of violence ... and give birth to a new society of brothers and sisters in which no one controls the other, no one is occupied by the other, no one causes insecurity for the other, no one takes liberty from the other," he said.

The Israeli army said 5,000 people descended on Bethlehem for Christmas. While the crowds were larger than in recent years, the numbers were far smaller than during the boom of the 1990s, when tens of thousands of people would flood into the West Bank town for Christmas.

Many of the visitors were local Palestinians, and in a cold, bitter rain, shopkeepers lamented that business remained in the doldrums. Tourism is vital to Bethlehem's economy.

"It's better than any (recent) year, but it's also bad," said Rony Tabash, a 23-year-old shopkeeper. He said he had rung up a mere \$40 in sales, compared to thousands of dollars of sales during the boom years.

Even so, Tabash, who spent the evening in his empty souvenir shop with relatives and friends, said he is hopeful things will get better. "Without hope, you cannot live," he said.

Since Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's death on Nov. 11, there has been a marked warming of ties between Israel and the new Palestinian leadership.

In a sign of the growing cooperation, Abbas was allowed to join the celebration, where he was greeted by cheering crowds. In previous years, Israel prevented Arafat from attending the celebration, accusing him of advocating violence.

"It's a troubled time in the Middle East, but we live in hope," said Joyce Maykut, 55, a Canadian lawyer who came from her home in the United Arab Emirates for the holiday. She said the hopeful atmosphere in the region attracted her to Bethlehem, despite safety concerns.

The celebratory atmosphere was a welcome contrast to the years. During the fighting, Bethlehem has been ringed by Israeli checkpoints and a massive separa-

changing world, Buckingham Palace said.

Spanish King Juan Carlos used his televised Christmas address to pay tribute to the victims of the March 11 train bombings.

The king said relatives of the



Children kiss a statue of Baby Jesus placed under the altar of St. Catherine's Catholic Church at the Church of the Nativity compound after a Roman Catholic Christmas Mass in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

barrier has been erected.

However, on Christmas Eve, troops allowed pilgrims, including Palestinians from throughout the West Bank, to pass easily through the roadblocks and handed out candy at checkpoints.

Abbas arrived in a large con-

voy Friday evening, the first time a Palestinian leader has been permitted to join the celebrations in four years.

The celebration gave an important boost to Abbas, who is the front-runner in Palestinian presidential elections next month.

Abbas, a Muslim, also stopped into a mosque to pray.

"We ask God and wish that all the religions in this country will live in peace and security," Abbas said. "I hope next year will be much better than the previous ones."

AP photos

## Christmas: Man climbs world's tallest skyscraper in Taiwan

CHRISTMAS, FROM PAGE 10

The queen's traditional Christmas message, to be broadcast on British television and radio later Saturday, would focus on themes of tolerance and respect in a

191 people who died in Spain's worst terrorist attack had his "deepest affection and understanding."

Many European cities were deserted Saturday as families gathered at home for traditional

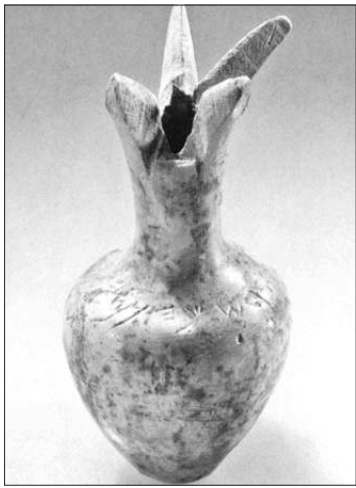
Christmas meals.

The mood was relaxed in Australia, where backpackers headed to Sydney's Bondi Beach, celebrating in bikinis and Santa suits. In Taiwan, a Frenchman who calls himself "Spiderman" marked the

day with a daredevil skyscraper climb. Alan Robert, 42, made it to the top of the 101-story Taipei 101, the world's tallest building.

Associated Press reporters Frances d'Emilio at the Vatican and Scott Lindlaw in Washington contributed to this report.





This undated photo released Friday by the Israel Museum shows an ivory pomegranate thought to have been one of the museum's prized possessions. The museum announced Friday that the pomegranate, touted as the only existing relic from Solomon's Temple, is a forgery.

## Item once thought to be Solomon's Temple relic now said to be forgery

By KARIN LAUB  
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — An ivory pomegranate long touted by scholars as the only relic from Solomon's Temple is a forgery, the Israel Museum said Friday, as investigators said they had broken up several fake antiquity rings in a wide-ranging investigation.

Indictments in that investigation are to be handed down this week, the officials said on the condition of anonymity.

Among those to be indicted is Israeli collector Oded Golan, the Justice Ministry confirmed. Golan, who denied wrongdoing, owns the two most spectacular artifacts declared fakes last year: a burial chest purported to be that of James, the brother of Jesus, and a stone tablet with inscriptions on how to maintain the Jewish Temple.

The pomegranate was examined by the museum independently of the probe by the Israeli authorities, said the director of the Israel Museum, James Snyder.

A team of experts found the thumb-sized pomegranate dates to the Bronze period, or about 3,400 years ago, meaning it is considerably older than the first Jewish Temple, and the inscription was added recently, the museum said in a statement.

The inscription, in ancient Hebrew lettering, reads: "Belonging to the Temple of the Lord (Yahweh), holy to the priests."

Scholars had believed the cream-colored pomegranate, which has a hole in the bottom, was used as the top of a scepter carried by a temple priest.

The temple was built in the 6th century B.C. and expanded by Herod before being destroyed in the year 70. Today, the Dome of the Rock — a Muslim shrine that is part of the Al Aqsa complex — is located near the site of the ancient temple.

The pomegranate was bought from an anonymous collector by the Israel Museum for \$550,000 in the 1980s, with the money deposited into a secret Swiss bank account at the time. The museum did not say whether it would ask police to investigate the transaction.

Snyder said the pomegranate was examined by several scholars before and after the purchase and was authenticated for the museum by Israeli archaeologist Nahman Avigad.

The director said the pomegranate was examined with the technologies available at the time. "I think care was taken," Snyder said, "if one does not take advantage of opportunities to bring into a museum setting objects that don't surface in excavations, you might miss great objects."

He said the pomegranate was re-examined with a new type of microscope that detected synthetic material in the inscription, between the ivory and the patina.

# Crackdown by premier strains Thailand's friendship with U.S.

By GLENN KESSLER  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A little over a year ago, as President Bush prepared to make a state visit to Thailand, he declared that the country's prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, was a "very strong leader" and a very capable leader. Bush said he admired Thaksin because he is "not afraid to make tough decisions" and "stands his ground in the face of criticism."

Thaksin, for his part, earlier this month called Bush a "good friend," noting that "we're both Texas cowboys." During Bush's October 2003 visit, Bush rewarded Thaksin for his assistance in the war against Iraq by granting Thailand the coveted status of a "major non-NATO ally."

Now this relationship is being tested, in ways that some U.S. officials believe mirror the increasingly troubled partnership between Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin. As with Putin, actions taken by Thaksin conflict with Bush's pledge to promote democracy and freedom around the world. And Thaksin's response to Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand has led to a nasty spat with Thailand's neighbors.

Thailand has long been considered a model of democracy and human rights in Southeast Asia. But Thaksin, a telecommunications billionaire who took office in 2001 and is running for re-election in February, in the past year has accelerated a campaign to tighten control over the media, attack human rights and democracy organizations, and oust critics in the government. Under Thaksin, for instance, there has been an increase in criminal defamation cases against the press and civil society groups, according to Article 19, a British free-speech group.

Thaksin's government has been widely criticized for a campaign against drug dealers in 2003 that left 3,000 dead, many through extrajudicial killings. The U.S. State Department's annual human rights report this year said the government's human rights record had "worsened with regard to extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests." The report concluded that a "climate of impunity" had been created through the government's failure to thoroughly investigate the deaths.

In October, a crackdown by the

Thai army on Muslim protesters in a southern province left at least 85 people dead. An investigative report by the Thai Senate's foreign relations committee said recently that the Thai army had arrested nearly 1,300 protesters, tying their hands behind their backs and forcing them to lie in piles five-deep in army trucks. The report said 78 people — many of whom were fasting because of the Muslim holiday of Ramadan — suffocated as they were carried in the trucks for six hours. People who complained of the confining conditions were severely beaten with rifle butts, the report said.

Thaksin, whose family is reported to have business interests in Burma, also has become increasingly close to the military regime there, to the point of justifying the continued detention of Nobel Peace laureate Aung San San Kyi. The 59-year-old democracy activist has already spent nine years in detention since 1989. Her party won a landslide election in 1990 that the military leadership has refused to accept.

U.S. officials acknowledge that Thaksin's government has prompted concerns, but they said that overall Thailand remains a good ally of the United States.

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# Is Washington race bad for democracy?

By REBECCA COOK  
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — The exhausting, excruciatingly close Washington governor's race might be the worst thing to happen to democracy since Florida's pregnant chads.

Or, it might be no big deal.

The votes are in (for now) after being counted three times since Election Day.

The courts have spoken (for now). Democrat Christine Gregoire won the final recount by a mere 130 votes out of 2.9 million cast, after losing the first two counts to Republican Dino Rossi by as little as 42.

Gregoire says it is over, but even those whose most fervent holiday wish was for a decided election don't really believe that.

The Republicans are pushing hard for counties to reconsider ballots they believe were wrongly rejected. The whole mess probably will head back to court, and it is not at all clear whether Washington will have a governor by inauguration day, Jan. 12.

So when the dust clears and the governor, whoever that may be, gets down to governing, will the controversy really make a difference?

The new governor "will have difficulties in perceived legitimacy," said University of Washington political science professor David Olson. "It will be very difficult to tackle big issues with a strong policy agenda. The mandate is not there."



Democrat Christine Gregoire — flanked by her daughter Michelle and husband Mike — addresses the media in Seattle on Wednesday, the day she took the lead in Washington's governor's race after King County officials announced results of a hand recount.

On the other hand, he acknowledged, losing the popular vote in 2000 did not stop George W. Bush from pursuing his agenda.

"People do have short memories," Washington State University political science professor Lance LeLoup said. "The stuff that seems so unbelievable right now, that people clutching their hearts and moaning that this is the end of life as we know it, a year down the line this will be a footnote in history."

If Gregoire does indeed claim the governor's office, she will enjoy the benefit of a Democratic state House and Senate.

The only sure winner so far is election reform. Proposals for reforming Washington's election process are going to be as common as umbrellas at the state Capitol this winter.

Secretary of State Sam Reed has suggested a package of changes, though he said he believes the election went well, all things considered.

"We don't expect it to be perfect," Reed said. "But we do have a system set up to correct those imperfections when they surface, and we have done that."

The two candidates predictably split over whether this election was free and fair.

"Like many people across Washington, I'm very concerned about the integrity of the election process, and I'm also very concerned that not all votes are being treated equally," Rossi said in an e-mailed statement Thursday. He said Washington has neither a clean election nor a legitimate governor.

Gregoire, on the other hand, brimmed with confidence in the Washington electoral system after the results were announced Thursday night.

"I think we have been a model to the rest of the nation and to the world at large," she said. "This is the biggest display of democracy I have ever seen, and I am proud of it."

Mindful of her microscopic margin of 0.0047 percent, Gregoire reached out to Rossi voters.

"A lot of heated words have been said during this recount," she said, perhaps remembering how the state Democratic party chairman called Rossi a thief. "But with the election coming to a close I am confident we can begin move forward as one state."

Some Republicans have urged Rossi not to contest the election, if only so he can come back stronger in 2008 to challenge Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell, or to run again for governor in 2008. Many other Republicans, though, say they will not give up so easily.

"We have the right to contest and we have the reasons to contest it," said Javier Figueroa of University Place, a state parks employee and Rossi supporter. He added: "This isn't about being a nice guy. This is about ensuring the process is a good, solid process. It's important to both sides to have that right."

## Doctors say Ga. mom, 59, to have twins soon

By ELLIOTT MINOR  
The Associated Press

SYLVESTER, Ga. — A 59-year-old great-grandmother who could become the oldest U.S. woman known to give birth to twins is resting in the seclusion of her rural mobile home and stubbornly refuses to head for a hospital, her relatives say.

Frances Harris, who was born Nov. 30, 1945, had been expected to give birth Dec. 21.

But doctors now say the twins, a boy and a girl, are expected to be born around Dec. 28, her daughter, Kendal Byrd, said Thursday.

"She's been in pain, having some small contractions," said Byrd, who at 34 is currently Harris' youngest child. "She can't get around that good. She gets tired, and she's grouchy, even with the family. She just doesn't want to be bothered."

Already Harris is the mother of five, grandmother of 14 and great-grandmother of six. Harris had her first child

when she was 15 years old, which means 44 years will separate her oldest from her youngest.

Byrd said the family plans to take Harris 170 miles north to Atlanta on Sunday, where she will stay with a relative until she has to go to a hospital.

If Harris goes into labor and can't make it to Atlanta, Harris may have to go to a closer hospital in either Albany, Tifton or Moultrie, Byrd said.

Harris' son, Frederick Jackson, a Tifton hospital worker, said the family had planned to take her to a hospital earlier in the week, but she refused, saying she preferred to remain at home for a few more days.

The twins' father, Raymond Harris, is 60 years old. Family members say they were shocked when they learned Harris was pregnant, especially because she had her tubes tied 34 years ago after the birth of Byrd.

"They are like miracle babies because she wasn't supposed to have any more," said her sister, Thelma Frier, 61.

## Airman pulls two from river in Okla.

The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — An airman home on leave from basic training jumped into the frigid water of the Arkansas River to save a mother and her 2-year-old son after their car lost control and crashed.

It was a happy ending Thursday for Detura Bills, 34, her young son and Joshua Johnson, who had just proposed marriage to his girlfriend when he became part of a dramatic rescue.

Bills' car, which swerved to avoid hitting a pickup truck that had cut in front of her, crashed into the water. Johnson, 18, who saw the accident from his own car, jumped in after her.

Johnson, who is training to work on ground radar in Biloxi, Miss., credited his Air Force training.

"That's all I was thinking is, 'I don't know who's in there or what, but I need to get them out,'" Johnson said. "I mean, they teach us really not to think —

just to act. I'm just glad that child survived."

Bills had nothing but praise for her rescuers.

"Despite a few bumps and bruises, we're both doing OK," she said. "It's a happy ending, and we're looking forward to a family Christmas."

And yes, Brittany Danielle Campbell accepted Johnson's marriage proposal. "I'm very proud of him," the 19-year-old said. "It was amazing. He didn't even hesitate."

## Fed-up Texas dad puts kids' gifts on eBay

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — The kids were naughty, Dad put the presents on eBay instead of under the tree — and Mom's been crying ever since.

Now, even the tree's down. Saturday morning was sure not to be very jolly for three brothers — 9, 11 and 15 — who didn't straighten up when their father told them Santa wasn't too pleased with their fighting, cuss words and obscene gestures.

Dad and Mom had warned their sons that the Nintendo DS video system — and the three games that go with it — were headed for the auction block if they didn't get their act together.

"No kidding. Three underserving boys have crossed the line. Tonight we sat down and showed them what they WILL NOT get for Christmas this year. I'll be taking the tree down tomorrow," the man announced in his eBay posting.

"If you don't buy them, we'll return them to the store," the seller known online as magumbo — 2000 reported on the site.

Thursday night, the auction wound down with bidding at \$465.01 — below the price the man had set. He said he would probably list the items again.

A single day of particularly bad behavior set the Christmas crackdown in motion.

"These are normally really good kids," said Dad, who asked the Houston Chronicle not to reveal his name.

Dad even admits he and Mom are partly to blame for being too lax at times.

But enough was enough. The warning of an impending sale came earlier in the week at a sit-down between offspring and parents.

"We told them they were destroying each other and the calm and peace in the household. It had to stop," said the man, who did tell the paper that he works as an information technology specialist and lives in Pasadena, Texas.

The boys pledged to be nice, but were back to their old ways the next morning.

That night, Dad announced that he would indeed be putting \$700 in video games up for sale on eBay. The oldest boy double-dared his dad to make good on his word.

Son shouldn't have done that.

Dad said Mom has been in tears since the showdown.

"I don't do it outwardly," he said, "but I'm crying on the inside."

# Yokota

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# Justice Dept. targets government corruption

BY LOLLITA C. BALDOR  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Connecticut Gov. John G. Rowland's guilty plea Thursday to a felony charge makes him only the latest in what is a steadily growing number of federal corruption prosecutions focusing on government officials.

Although totals have not yet been released, the number of such cases pursued by federal authorities has grown by as much as 15 percent over the last four years, according to a Justice Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The increase, said the official, reflects the high priority placed on public corruption cases rather than a sudden spike in the number of dishonest politicians.

But the steady slide of high-profile public officials into ethical and criminal scandals risks fostering increasing distrust of government leaders.

"The government is wounded," said Connecticut House Majority Leader James Amann. "It's something most of us are concerned

## Recent cases show increasing scrutiny of ethical misdoings

about. Most people have their hearts in the right place — to serve the public. But no matter how well you construct the laws and make the rules, there will always be the ones who decide to break the law."



Rowland

In recent months, two northeast governors have resigned in disgrace and a presidential cabinet nominee withdrew his name in a swirl of controversy over a nanny-housekeeper he employed.

Ethical missteps, ranging from improper campaign contributions and gifts to racketeering and tax fraud, also led to the downfall of former U.S. House Speaker Nefti Gingrich, R-Ga., former Sen. Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., and Rep. James Traficant, D-Ohio.

And in a case that rocked the

nation, former President Bill Clinton's dalliance with a White House intern led to his impeachment by the House. But he survived a Senate trial and finished his term in office.

In the most recent cases:

■ Rowland pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to steal honest service in connection with a two-year investigation into corruption in his administration.

■ New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey stepped down after acknowledging that he'd had an affair with another man.

■ Former New York Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik withdrew his name from nomination as homeland security secretary after revealing he had not paid all required taxes for a family nanny-housekeeper and that the woman may have been in the country illegally.

In 2000, federal authorities indicted 1,000 public officials, according to Justice Department statistics. By 2002, the number

had increased to 1,136, while the 2003 figure, not yet released, stayed relatively stable. The 2004 total will be up again, reflecting up to a 15 percent increase over the 2000 figure, said the Justice Department official.

However, he added, "I don't think there is more public corruption than 10 years ago or 20 years ago. I think we're doing a better job of finding it and prosecuting it."

Although the number of lawyers assigned to the Criminal Division's public integrity section has remained constant at about 30, the Justice Department works with U.S. attorneys on corruption probes, including the Rowland investigation. Justice officials from Attorney General John Ashcroft on down have said that while counterterrorism remains the top priority, ferreting out public corruption also ranks very high.

In response, a number of U.S. attorneys nationwide have set up special units to target corrupt poli-

ticians, focusing on election violations and campaign finance investigations.

Lawmakers are also taking notice.

"There is a greater awareness on the part of public officials that government needs to be run in an ethical way, by ethical people," said Peggy Kerner, director of the Center for Ethics in Government at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Legislators "want training to show the public they can operate with high ethical standards and that they are upholding the public trust," said Kerner, who has visited 11 states since Election Day to provide ethics training for state officials. While many are instructed about their state's ethics laws, she said they are also looking for guidance on core values.

"Something may be legal, but that doesn't mean it's ethical," said Kerner, adding that the center is getting a "significant increase" in requests for training over previous years.

# Casino hostage-taking ends in suspect's death

BY DAISY NGUYEN  
The Associated Press

GARDENA, Calif. — Police shot and killed a carjacking suspect who ran into a crowded casino early Friday and took two patrons hostage.

The man hijacked a luxury car on Thursday and led police on a 30-minute chase after they spotted the vehicle early Friday, authorities said.

With the car still rolling, the man jumped out at the Hustler Casino, a Gardena card club owned by Hustler magazine mogul Larry Flynt.

The suspect shot at police officers in the casino's parking lot, but no one was hit, Los Angeles Police Department Assistant Chief Jim McDonnell said.

The gunman then ran into the crowded casino and took a hostage.

He later released the hostage, but took another, police said.

An LAPD officer shot the suspect in the head, McDonnell said.

The man was pronounced dead late Friday morning at a hospital, said Lt. David Smith, supervising investigator of the Los Angeles County coroner's office.

Smith said he could not release the man's name until authorities contacted his next of kin.

No one else was hurt. Patrons and casino employees poured out of the casino when they heard shots being fired.

"Up to 1,000 patrons were inside the casino when the suspect ran inside with the weapon, so you can imagine the chaotic situation," McDonnell said.

The casino was closed as police reviewed footage from a security camera and interviewed dozens of witnesses.



TORRENCE (CALIF.): DAILY BREEZE/AP

Gardena Police officer Victor Gomez inspects a vehicle involved in a carjacking at the Hustler Casino in Gardena, Calif. The driver fled into the casino, where he sent gamblers fleeing and took two people hostage at gunpoint before an officer shot him, authorities said.

# Ruling prevents some federal doctors from blowing whistle

BY JOHN SOLOMON  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Thousands of federal doctors and medical researchers who receive some of the highest salaries in government don't enjoy the same protection to blow the whistle on wrongdoing as other civil servants, a judge has ruled.

Administrative Judge Raphael Ben-Ami of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board ruled recently that Dr. Jonathan Fishbein, a National Institutes of Health specialist, could not seek the board's protection from firing under the Whistleblower Protection Act.

Fishbein was hired by NIH in 2003 to help improve AIDS research practices. He alleges he is being fired because he uncovered concerns about sloppy research practices that might endanger patient safety.

NIH said he is being fired for poor performance and that the allegations come from a "disgruntled" employee who failed to make his two-year probation period.

Fishbein is a "Title 42" employee and is paid \$178,000 a year, slightly more than the \$175,700 that members of President Bush's Cabinet receive.

Title 42 of the federal code al-

lows the government to pay research and medical experts as special consultants and give them salaries higher than the civil servant maximums. The law is designed to help the government compete against high-paying private firms.

NIH employs more than 3,559 Title 42 employees and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employs another 200 to 300, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ben-Ami ruled Nov. 9 that Fishbein was not covered by the Whistleblower Protection Act because he is a Title 42 employee and has "no appeal rights" during his two-year probationary period.

"Title 42 appointments of special consultants are made without regard to the civil service laws" and therefore they aren't permitted to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board under the whistleblower law, he ruled. "The board lacks authority to consider the appellants' claims of discrimination or retaliation."

Fishbein's lawyers are appealing to the full board.

The whistleblower protection law was passed more than decade ago to strengthen federal workers' protections when they raise allegations of federal wrongdoing, giving them outlets like the

board and the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to seek legal protection.

The National Whistleblower Center, a Washington-based group that represents whistleblowers like Fishbein, is urging Congress to fix what it called a "dangerous loophole" that exempts Title 42 workers from whistleblower protections.

"This is a major setback for drug safety," said Kris Kolesnik, the center's executive director. "Many of these employees, such as Dr. Fishbein, hold sensitive health and safety related positions. Without protections, these employees will not blow the whistle."



## FACES

# Representin' the Far East Side

## Chinese-American rapper Jin out to be more than a novelty

BY MARK KENNEDY  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As rap stars go, Jin has the typical look down cold: Hoodie, baggy sweat, chunky diamond stud earring, a Chinese character tattooed on his neck and a large blingy necklace.

Not everything's typical, though.

"Yeah, I'm Chinese. And what?" he asks with mock exasperation.

At just 22, the Miami-bred, New York-based rapper is something of a pioneer — the first Asian-American hip-hop artist to get a major solo record deal.

At the same time, he worries that it's his race, not his rhymes, generating all the attention.

"Being Asian helps me so much," he says. "It definitely raises the interest level. But for every three steps forward, it's five back because being the ethnicity that I am completely overshadows what I'm bringing to the table."

What he brings on his debut album "The Rest Is History" is a mix of songs that smack of old-school hip-hop's wit and optimism, delivered with a flow and tone similar to Eminem.

The CD is also chock-full of references to Jin's roots, including mentions of the Great Wall of China, basketball big man Yao Ming, China's forced-adoption policy, Tiananmen Square and the struggle of Asian immigrants.

"*Them sneakers on your feet cost 100 a pop / My people making 15 cents a day in sweatshops / To make them kicks so you can look good / Think we open restaurants 'cause we cook good*" he raps in one song.

"I'm very adamant about promoting Asian culture," Jin said during an interview. "It's a hip-hop record that's never been done. I'm pretty much promoting Asian culture and young it in hip-hop."

Consumers have so far given a lukewarm embrace to the young rapper who earned his reputation as a freestyle battler. His album hit the Billboard Top 200 at No. 54 in



VIRGIN RECORDS/AP

Miami-based rapper Jin knows that his heritage makes him a curiosity for many hip-hop fans. His task, the Chinese-American says, is to represent the Asian community well, while earning respect on the merits of his music.

October with some 20,000 units sold, then dropped precipitously.

"I don't believe Jin is a flash in the pan," says Lionel Ridenour, who's helping develop Jin as Virgin Records' executive vice president of urban music. "I think that he's only begun to scratch the surface. It's all about consistency."

In person, Jin's personality quickly undermines his tough-guy look. He politely turns off his cell phone before chatting and admits that he cries at Disney movies. An end title song on his album, "Thank You," is a list of all the people he loves. And he likes chatting with fans on the Internet, despite being told by his managers that keeping so close undermines his mystique.

Oh, and that Chinese tattoo sliding up his neck? No, it's not a prison tat or gang affiliation — just his name.

"I don't think you have to be a certain way to be rapper. I am who I am. I'm not a tough guy. But I have a lot of heart in what I do," he says. "Sensitivity is a real part of me. I'm a real human being."

"You know how there's the term, 'Keeping it real'?" he asks.

"The people that understand the concept realize that being real is not going to jail. Being real is not being the guy who pulls out a gun. That's not being real. The true definition is really just being who you are."

The rapper — born Jin Au-Yeung — fell in love with hip-hop on the Miami streets, honing his lyrical skills in head-to-head rhyming contests while making food deliveries from his family's Chinese restaurant.

He eventually gained national attention on Black Entertainment Television's "106th

& Park" rap freestyle competition, outlasting all rivals for seven consecutive weeks with a blend of cheeky and innovative rhymes.

Knowing his race might be used against him, Jin made pre-emptive strikes: "Yeah I'm Chinese," he told one competitor. "Now you'll understand it / I'm the reason why you're little sis' eyes are slanted."

After moving to New York, Jin was signed to the Ruff Ryders label — hence the diamond double-R necklace around his neck — and won a role opposite Tyrese and Ludacris in John Singleton's "2 Fast, 2 Furious."

All this before his first CD ever hit record stores. When it did — enduring more than a dozen blown release dates — he had brought along some big names for help, including Wyclef Jean and Kanye West.

The first single, "Learn Chinese," is as bombastic and fun as the artist himself. "The days of the pork fried rice and the chicken wings coming to your house by me is over / Y'all gon' learn Chinese," he warns.

Even so, Jin was initially worried. "Automatically, it kind of puts it under the 'gimmick' umbrella," he says. "By the same token, I've encountered people that love the record — and that's all ethnicities."

If you're still skeptical, Jin understands: He might be too.

"If I was just a random hip-hop fan, and I saw Jin and I didn't know him, the first thing I would think, too, is, 'Yo, is this guy the truth? Is he serious?' I would question his knowledge of hip-hop," he says.

Which puts Jin in an uncomfortable position. On the one hand, he feels pressure from skeptical non-Asians, eager to question his mainstream hip-hop legitimacy. On the other, he knows he must deliver for his Asian fans.

"Not to feel that I can't live up to the hype, but sometimes I feel like the bar is set so high that even if I am accomplishing something that's great, it doesn't meet the super-sensational great that people want," he says.

"Even within the Asian community, you'd better believe there are people out there who have the mentality, 'Yo, if this guy is a success, he's a success for all of us. We're gonna root and cheer for him.' But you got to believe, though, that they also say, 'If this guy fails, he's holding us all back.'"

## Brando's estate triggers lawsuit

Marlon Brando's former business manager filed a \$3.5 million claim against his estate, alleging the Oscar winner sexually harassed her and breached their contract by removing her as a co-executor of his will days before his death.

The lawsuit comes nearly six months after Brando died of lung failure July 1 in Los Angeles. He was 80.

The claim, submitted by lawyers for Jo An Corrales of Kalama, Wash., says Brando "caused a hostile work environment due to his continuous acts of sexual harassment." The claim says the harassment continued throughout her employment from December 2000 until March 8.

No other details of the allegations were included in the claim filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

## Michigan rocker becomes a Texan

The Motor City Madman is officially turning Texan. Michigan rocker and hunting activist Ted Nugent says he plans to get a Texas driver's license soon. He said in a phone interview that he'll officially become a Texas resi-

dent in 2005, after moving his family to Crawford, Texas, about 18 months ago.

Nugent — who said he supports President Bush "100 percent" — said his new home is "right around the corner" from Bush's ranch.

Nugent said he's working with the Texas fish and game department, where he writes for a state publication on bowhunting.

## Beyond the grave, Reeve continues to give

Christopher Reeve played a superhero in the movies, and now, two months after his death, he's a superhero to a 14-year-old boy.

Tyler Howard of Charlestown, N.H., is a quadriplegic and has been in a wheelchair for 10 years. Reeve's family gave Howard the late actor's specially modified van, so he can get around with his wheelchair and other medical equipment.

"I'm free, I'm free," Howard said. "I can go where I want."

Howard said he always wanted to be able to attend school functions, visit classmates and go to church and family outings.

## Only stars get the prison special

Police Chief James Walters gave Diana Ross special treatment while the singer served her sentence for an Arizona drunken-driving conviction, the town's police union said.

Ross pleaded no contest in February and was sentenced to two days in jail. She arranged to serve her jail sentence in Greenwich, where she lives.

The former lead singer for the Supremes was arrested Dec. 30, 2002, after a driver called to report a car traveling south in the northbound lanes outside Tucson.

Tests showed Ross had a blood-alcohol level of 0.20 percent, police said. Arizona's legal limit for drivers is 0.08.

Walters allowed Ross to have a cell phone in her jail cell, have food delivered and let her go home in the middle of her sentence, the police union said in a 44-page report to public officials that was given to the Green Valley Times.

"In the situation involving the incarceration of Ms. Ross, I made some poor decisions and accept responsibility for them," Walters said at a news conference. He didn't say which decisions he regretted.

From wire services





## Dog back at home

**NH** NASHUA — A 71-year-old man who was separated from his dog during a traffic accident has been reunited with the tiny rat terrier.

Divas escaped from Baker's car after the accident in Amherst. The 4½-year-old terrier raced off while Baker was being treated.

Distraught family members had returned to the area daily to look for him.

Then the family received a phone message from Rod and Lynn Spencer of Merrimack, about 5 miles from the accident scene. They saw the dog in their driveway and recognized it from a picture in the newspaper.

## Thwarting horse theft

**TX** FORT WORTH — It's not easy to get a lot harder to steal a horse in Texas.

Starting in January, the Fort Worth-based Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association will launch a national Web-based theft-prevention service.

The service will help ranchers and law enforcement officers track down stolen horses by recording vital information from horses, such as color, description, medical history and brand and will include a digital picture, said Todd McCartney, director of the program for the organization.

For \$30 per horse, information submitted by horse owners will be made available to law enforcement through the Internet. After two years, the annual rate drops to \$10 per horse, McCartney said. The association's 13,000 members, however, can immediately subscribe to the service for \$10 per horse, he said.

The association's field inspectors recovered more than \$5 million in stolen livestock and equipment in 2003.

## Judge orders fish review

**MT** BILLINGS — A federal judge in Colorado has ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to re-evaluate the status of Yellowstone cutthroat trout and whether the fish should be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The agency "arbitrarily and capriciously" concluded that a petition seeking federal protection for the fish did not present "substantial information" that such protection was warranted, federal Judge Phillip S. Figa wrote in a decision issued late last week.

Figa ordered the Fish and Wildlife Service to complete a 12-month review of the matter.

## Milkshake poisoning

**MI** TROY — A woman who police say tried to kill her husband and teenage son by offering them milkshakes laced with lethal doses of prescription medication has been charged in the case.

A warrant for Mary Ellen Cannon was signed, Oakland County Chief Deputy Prosecutor Deborah Carley said. Cannon was expected to face five felony counts, including attempted murder and poisoning.

Police said the motive was unclear.

If convicted, the 46-year-old suburban Detroit woman could be sen-

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

tenced to up to life in prison.

Toxicology reports indicated that lethal doses of prescription medications prescribed for sleep disorders and panic attacks, regulating blood pressure and easing pain were found in the milkshakes.

## Splitting county vote

**CA** SANTA BARBARA — If voters approve a county split and form a new Mission County in the north, residents in remaining Santa Barbara County will be saddled with the existing \$43 million in capital debt. A five-member panel deciding the financial viability of a new county spent months wrestling with a "fair, just and equitable" division of assets and debt. Voters are expected to decide on a split in June 2006.

## Undelivered mail

**VA** ROANOKE — A postal worker was fired and could face charges after federal authorities, acting on a tip, found thousands of pieces of undelivered mail in the letter-carrier's home and garage.

U.S. Postal Inspector Brett Brumbaugh said a citizen who discovered more than 500 pieces of undelivered mail contacted law enforcement officials. He would not elaborate on where the mail was found.



**Awesome skate trick**  
Drew Williams shows off his best flip trick at a skate park in El Dorado, Ark.

The investigation led authorities to search a temporary postal worker's home, Brumbaugh said. He said the mail found at the home included everything from credit card applications to packages to bills. Some of the mail had been opened, he said.

Brumbaugh said the case will be turned over to the federal prosecutor, who could charge the former carrier with stealing mail.

## Naughty act

**PA** SHAMOKIN — Santa definitely knows one boy was not nice this year.

A 17-year-old is accused of firing a pellet gun from a second-story window, hitting a man dressed as Santa Claus. Police said the boy confessed.

Scott Slodysko, a volunteer fireman, was riding out a fire truck when he heard a popping sound at an intersection.

Slodysko said he knew immediately that somebody with a pellet gun was to blame.

"We do this for the kids," Slodysko said. "I just can't believe someone would do something like that."

## Unlocking mysteries

**IL** CHICAGO — A new X-ray machine will help anthropologists unlock mysteries locked inside some of the Field Museum's collection of ancient mummies and pottery. Mikron Digital Imaging is lending the \$225,000 portable X-ray, used to diagnose broken bones. Among 40 specimens selected from the museum's 1.5 million anthropology objects, researchers will examine the skeleton of "The Magdalenian Girl" to gauge her exact age.

## Limiting decorations

**UT** SALT LAKE CITY — Some Utah cities, including Salt Lake City, are trimming their Christmas decorations. Some cash-strapped towns say they're cutting back on lights and other decorations and turning those responsibilities to the private sector. In Salt Lake, private groups including the Mormon church have combined to spend an estimated \$1 million to light up Utah's capital city.

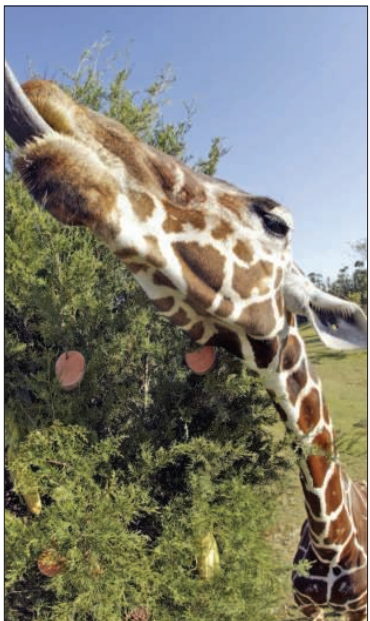
## Tunnel to open

**PA** PITTSBURGH — A 3,600-foot tunnel route in and out of Pittsburgh will open Monday for the first time in 74 years.

Officials hope the former railroad tunnel will ease traffic for a city hedged in by rivers. The tunnel was closed when the old Wash Railroad went bankrupt. The passage will be restricted to car pools during rush hour. It's expected that as many as 4,500 vehicles will use the tunnel daily.

## Antiques net profit

**KY** FRANKFORT — A collection of abandoned treasures owned by the state sold on eBay for \$16,180 after a weeklong auction. The items included jewelry, silverware, pocket watches and antique currency. The state treasury department put items from 20 forgotten safe-deposit boxes on the Web site Dec. 13. The highest bid was \$3,151.01 for a gold pocket watch purchased by a bidder in Israel.



## Tree-licking good

A giraffe reaches for a nutritious, edible Christmas ornament adorning a tree in Bush Gardens Serengeti Plain, in Tampa, Fla. The festive treats are part of the park's animal enrichment program offered regularly to many species at Bush Gardens Tampa.



## Here I come!

Chas Duckett, 8, enjoys sledding down the hill at 13th Street in Ames, Iowa, after the area's first substantial snow fall.





**Big proposal** Roofing contractor Kevin Sterwald makes his intentions known in a big way by displaying a marriage proposal for his girlfriend, Jodi Buchholz, on the roof of a barn he was working in rural Watertown, Wis. The 90-foot sign and a waiting limousine surprised Buchholz, who arrived anticipating only lunch. She accepted his proposal.



**Good to the last drop** A squirrel cleans the last drops from a beverage cup found blowing in the wind in Hoyt Park in Saginaw, Mich.



**Tree wrapping** Brian Foster, left, pushes as Wally Reney pulls a Christmas tree through a tree wrapper for a customer at Monadnock View Farm in Keene, N.H.

## Crime boss on the run

**MA** BOSTON — Fugitive mobster James “Whitey” Bulger is getting better with age, even as federal authorities say they’re refining their nearly 10-year hunt for the former Boston crime boss.

Bulger, 75, has made fewer mistakes in recent years. Early on, he made regular contact with associates, but a new detailed timeline of his odyssey shows he’s since isolated himself.

Authorities say they’re as determined as ever to capture Bulger, who lived a double life as a ruthless gangster and an FBI informant before fleeing racketeering charges in January 1995. He’s also charged in connection with 21 murders.

Investigators over the past decade have looked into Bulger sightings in about 30 nations and every continent but Antarctica.

Most of the sightings, however, turned out to be false alarms.

## Ruffling experience

**VT** BECKLEY — Jared Williams ruffled a few feathers while touring on Interstate 64.

A wild turkey flew into the truck’s windshield.

Williams was traveling about 70 mph at the time, but managed to pull safely to the side of the road. “It looked like someone stuffed the turkey in the windshield,” said Dave Creager of Creager Automotive Repair Service. “It didn’t look real.”

Williams, 22, had been driving a company truck for Appalachian Laboratories during the collision, and endured turkey jokes from his co-workers the rest of the day.

## Archbishop’s say denied

**CO** DENVER — The Catholic Lawyers Guild of Colorado decided against giving the Denver archbishop the final say when it comes to choosing honorees for their two annual awards. Incoming guild president Laura Tighe says the organization wanted independence from Archbishop Charles Chaput, who has criticized politicians and others for not following church teachings on abortion and other issues.

## More money for tutors

**AZ** PHOENIX — The state plans to use an anticipated \$10 million in surplus school aid to add tutoring for students having difficulty passing the AIMS graduation test. So far, only half of the state’s high school juniors have passed the math portion. The governor and state superintendent agreed to use the surplus money rather than wait for a legislative appropriation.

## American adventure

**MN** MANKATO — Donors bought a bus ticket and gave traveling money to a man who suffered a series of misadventures after illegally crossing the Mexican border, but he probably just needed a good map.

Juan Rivera, 46, left his home in Juarez, Mexico, last week. He slipped into El Paso, Texas, and went to Riverside, Calif., to look for a temporary job. When he couldn’t find work, he asked someone which train headed back to El Paso.

But the train went to the wrong city. So he got on another train, then another. Somehow he ended up in Mankato in the middle of the night, according to Blue Earth County Sheriff Brad Peterson, who heard Rivera’s story through an interpreter.

Wearing only jeans and three shirts, Rivera walked to a convenience store and crawled into a trash bin to stay warm. But a garbage truck dumped the contents of the trash bin, including Rivera, into the truck.

When the truck got to its next stop, Rivera crawled out the back and the driver called 911. He was treated at a local hospital for minor injuries.

Although he entered the country illegally, Peterson said the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement had no interest in him. Having broken no local laws, and considering his harrowing experience, Peterson told Rivera he was free to go.

## Expensive tree strapping

**VT** MONTPELIER — Strapping that Christmas tree to the top of a sport utility vehicle can be a real drag.

A couple of engineers at the University of Vermont claim that sport utility vehicles topped with trees have 26 percent more aerodynamic drag than treeless SUVs.

Knowing the energy density of gasoline, typical engine efficiencies and the number of trees sold, they concluded that an extra 53,000 gallons of gas are used each year to retrieve trees.

And given high fuel costs, that translates to a nationwide total of about \$100,000.

## Police psychotherapist

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS — Gov.-elect Mitch Daniels named a police psychotherapist and martial arts hall of famer to head the Indiana State Police. Dr. Paul Whitesell, 53, is a psychotherapist with the Fort Wayne Police Department and has been a trainer with law enforcement agencies and the U.S. military. He was inducted into the Martial Arts Hall of Fame in 2002.

## Hair Cuttery lawsuit

**MD** BALTIMORE — Eight women have filed a federal class action against Hair Cuttery’s parent company, saying the Virginia-based salon chain discriminates against black customers.

The action grows out of a lawsuit filed this year by Paulette Harris, an Anne Arundel County woman who said the salon tried to charge her more because she is black.

In that suit, Harris said that a Hair Cuttery employee tried to charge her \$8 extra for her shampoo because of her “ethnic” hair.

Harris also said that she was asked to pay in advance because, she said the staff told her, “ethnic” people tend to leave without paying.

In the class action request filed this week in U.S. District Court, other Baltimore-area women recounted similar experiences at local Hair Cuttery stores.

Hair Cuttery is a walk-in unisex chain with 800 stores, according to its Web site.

Stories and photos from wire services

# STARS AND STRIPES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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JOHN D. PANASIEWICZ, General Manager, Pacific  
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## Be happy Okinawa teams exist

I read with interest the letter "On travel, DODDS on vacation" (Dec. 17). Letter writer Lori LaGrave has a very unique outlook toward Okinawa. He seems to feel that Kadena and Kubiaki high schools are being discriminated against because they are not given the opportunity to "travel" with their sports programs. As a coach for Matthew C. Perry High School on Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station, Japan, I say they are pretty lucky in the fact that they have enough students to offer various sporting programs in their school. Here in Iwakuni we have had to cancel our football team this year, the baseball team last year and the girls' softball team for both years, all because we are a very small school and have difficulty fielding enough players for these teams. I know of several students who would love to play on these teams, but are not given the opportunity to even because there are not enough players to fill out the team.

In many cases these players work hard in practice to try to build a team only to see it fall apart due to inelegibility or injuries. I would even go as far as to say that I have seen a few of our players who, given the chance to play for the Kadena or Kubiaki team, would probably take a starting position and be a star. Unfortunately they are not given the fair and "equal" opportunity to even play because their parents got them into here.

As for the "travel," be careful for what you wish for. Mr. LaGrave made the comment that "Kubiaki" Kadena student-athletes as a whole have grade-point averages well above those of their peers." This may be true for now, but start having them travel and see if it makes a difference. Two years ago I coached the Perry baseball team and we only had three home games scheduled. This required us to travel by bus six times to Tokyo in order to play our games. This meant that many players had to leave home on Thursday night to take the 12-hour bus ride up to Tokyo, get off the bus and play their games, and then return by bus on Sunday. After four straight weeks of that, not only had our grades dropped, but most of the players were just wishing for a home game where they wouldn't be the tired ones and their parents could actually watch them play.

As for the money, well I can only imagine how Kadena or Kubiaki manage their budgets. Last time I checked, money doesn't grow on trees and plane tickets cost money. Given the fair and "equal" formula, each time those teams travel, the other team would also have to travel to Okinawa. This would cost Department of Defense Dependents Schools quite a sum of money. Why do you think they make us take a bus?

Of course, I'm sure that by Mr. LaGrave's logic, I'm thinking for this country that we should be pulled out of the island somewhere with no negative impact on the system at all. Of course we could take it from our budget for books, classroom materials, or computers for the schools. Or better yet, take it from the budget for teacher training, since they really

## Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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don't need to stay up to date on their subject matter to teach your children.

[DODDS spokesman Henry] Meyer is entirely correct when he says, "Don't compare us with other areas." Mr. LaGrave lives on an island in the middle of the Pacific, so he can't expect to be treated like a stateside school that can take a bus to the next school to play. Given this, and that the purpose of the school is to educate, I think it is more than fair that DODDS spends the money to allow Kadena and Kubiaki to have sports programs. Mr. LaGrave should stop complaining about his situation and come up with feasible solutions, such as raising the money for travel through fund-raisers if it is that important to travel.

I think a better solution would be to help the local (Japanese) schools develop football teams for Kadena and Kubiaki to play. The last time I was on Okinawa there were plenty of students at Japanese high schools. We have two teams we play in Hiroshima that have really come around since we started playing with them in an annual game.

Marine Gunnery Sgt. Kevin C. Crone (Ret.)  
Iwakuni, Japan

## Compassionate acts continue

Sixty years ago, my quiet town was in the last stages of war.

On Dec. 24 the town was reduced to rubble by an American bombing campaign. Most people that I hear talk about that period were children living in the country. It was a very difficult life following the war, but relief packages provided by Americans helped them survive.

Acts of kindness, mercy and compassion for the defenseless civilian casualties of war were some of the best characteristics of American people that now-prosperous adult Germans mention.

It's still dark at 7:15 this morning. I have the seven-light electric candles that deco-

rate my home and Swedish homes lighting my kitchen. The small, white lights that decorate the houses and yards are shining brightly against the fog that has frozen on spider webs, draping down windows and with the finest natural garland. I take some comfort in being able to sit in a warm kitchen in a peaceful village of I contemplate the aftermath of war.

I believe that the compassionate acts of the post-World War II American soldiers and civilians planted seeds of good will that continue to bear fruit today.

It is hard to think of any American (especially those who work overseas in military countries) who does not have a relative, neighbor or co-worker with a loved one fighting in the war against terror. Our soldiers in Iraq continue to try to meet the needs of children through school renovation, drives to get school supplies and toys, and efforts to bring peace and democratic rule to their land. I hope that in 60 years elderly Iraqis will have tales of their wartime childhood and the compassionate citizens of the world who came to their aid.

Susan K. Kerns  
Bilburg-Moetsch, Germany

## Hunting preserves balance

This is in response to "Hunting photo unnecessary" (letter, Dec. 14).

The writer expresses that "yahoes are out there attempting to prove their manhood (or lack of it)," however, this is not the case with the vast majority of hunters. The majority of hunters do not condone killing wildlife solely for trophy purposes; however, there is a small minority that does and this is deplorable.

There is an American stereotype of "Redneck Bob" dressed in camouflage equipment all deer in America. Not so! Most hunters are skilled, intelligent individuals who are matching wits against animals with superior senses of smell, eyesight and hearing.

American founders imported 40,000 white-tailed deer to America and, to date, there are about 5 million in Texas. The deer population rises while hunters' numbers are declining, which is offsetting the balance, especially without many wild predatory animals in the United States.

Hunting is wildlife management. Wildlife must be harvested to reduce the density in animal populations and to reduce crops and habitat damage from overpopulation.

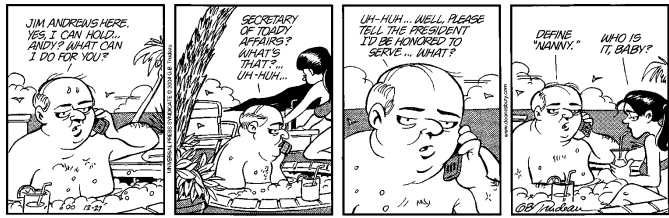
Hunting licenses are regulated and harvested animal numbers are managed by game officials. Harvesting animals for management and food purposes is not cruelly, it is right. Many states allow hunters to donate deer to food programs as a humanitarian gesture.

The act of killing is barbaric in nature, so I concur with the writer on this point. To truly see the "necessary" barbarism of killing animals for food, I recommend that Stars and Stripes run an article on animal slaughterhouse operations.

Chief Warrant Officer J. Steven Schantz  
Camp Liberty, Iraq

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

## Doonesbury



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## OPINION

## Why not hold Rumsfeld to same standard?

When I heard President Bush praising Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld last week, my mind strayed to the story of two Army reservists who were in the brig.

## Trudy Rubin



May Cathy Kaus and Chief Warrant Officer Darrell Birt arrived in Kuwait in March 2003, but their unit didn't get enough trucks to carry crucial equipment into Iraq. So the two officers commandeered some abandoned Army trucks by the roadside, loaded it up, and headed for Tikrit.

Their reward? A court-martial for theft, and dishonorable discharges.

"The soldiers were held accountable for their actions," an Army spokesman said. In other words, Kaus and Birt were punished for breaking the rules so their troops could carry out their mission.

But no one holds Rumsfeld accountable for undermining the mission and undercutting the troops.

The recent flap over unarmored Humvees — and Rumsfeld's flip remarks to a reservist who complained about having to scavenge for armor — are part of a bigger pattern.

There's a reason why 50,000 reservists were sent to war in 2003 with outdated body armor, and why families had to raise funds to send their loved ones Kevlar vests with ceramic plates. There's a reason so many Humvees and trucks are still unarmored.

There's a reason Kaus and Birt had to im-

prove to sustain their mission: Rumsfeld refused to recognize the nature of the situation into which he sent those troops.

Rumsfeld was so eager to test out his new, lean military machine that he didn't want to plan for the likelihood of instability after Saddam Hussein fell. The State Department, the CIA and many military commanders urged that more forces be available to establish order after the war. No way, said Rumsfeld.

According to the Pentagon, the aftermath of the war was supposed to be easy. No military police were sent in to stop postwar looting, which encouraged the rise of the insurgents. Pentagon officials talked about drawing down to 50,000 U.S. troops by fall of 2003.

No wonder no one paid attention to the reservists. They weren't supposed to be on the front lines. The Pentagon never contemplated the prospect of an insurgency, in which the front lines are everywhere.

Even as the insurgency took root — in the fall of 2003 — Rumsfeld refused to admit the situation was urgent. As late as this month, he tried to blame the shortage of armored humvees on lack of production capacity.

Yet the manufacturers of Humvees and armored plates for the U.S. military say they aren't running near capacity. They say the Pentagon just hadn't asked them to produce more.

Rumsfeld's fierce resistance to admitting to problems has cost U.S. troops dearly. ...

The exit date of U.S. troops depends, as President Bush admits, on when Iraqi armed forces are capable of securing their country. Rumsfeld's mismanagement ensures that date won't come any time soon.

In March, the secretary claimed that Iraq had 200,000 security forces "taking over re-



sponsibility for the country." This puffed-up figure was meaningless; most were untrained police or security guards, not forces trained to fight insurgents. ...

President Bush admitted last week that the results of U.S. training efforts were "mixed, in terms of standing up Iraqi units who are willing to fight."

Why such poor results? Again, responsibility lies with Rumsfeld.

For nearly a year after Baghdad's fall, the Pentagon preferred to pursue its political vision of a new kind of Arab country without

an army rather than equip Iraqis to fight their own bad guys.

Rumsfeld chose to disband the Iraqi army, instead of vetting and retraining some units. He nixed Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's plan to bring back five Iraqi army divisions. ...

Iraq's security forces and our own have been bitterly served by these lapses. Isn't it time that someone on high — rather than loyal reservists — is held responsible for the Pentagon's mistakes?

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

## Military transformation among secretary's successes

BY NEWT GINGRICH

The recent calls for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to step down provide a good opportunity to step back and review his record from the last four years.

Shortly after Mr. Rumsfeld began what would be his second tour of duty as secretary of defense, he made it clear that he would do what it takes to begin transforming the military and its supporting bureaucracies into a force capable of meeting the threats of the 21st century. In his 2001 Senate confirmation hearing, Mr. Rumsfeld testified, "The old deterrence of the Cold War era is insufficient for dissuading the threats of the 21st century and for maintaining stability over our new security environment."

In the face of enormous internal opposition, Mr. Rumsfeld, who under President Ford directed a military that stood ready to face the might of the Warsaw Pact, began in the summer of 2001 to transform the defense bureaucracy by forcing it to recognize that the Cold War was over. He then began implementing the necessary changes.

Most notably, he undertook an extraordinarily complicated set of negotiations with our allies to move forces from obsolete and expensive Cold War positions in Europe and East Asia to much more useful and less expensive positions from where they can be more effective in defending America.

Just weeks after Mr. Rumsfeld's Defense Department transformation plan had begun, the United States was attacked on Sept. 11.

By now the response to that attack is well

known. Mr. Rumsfeld took control and led the remarkably successful campaign in Afghanistan, which led in short order to the defeat of the Taliban and the destruction of its terrorist training camps.

Even during ongoing military campaigns, Mr. Rumsfeld never wavered from his objectives. In the summer of 2003, in order to accelerate transformation in the Army, he brought Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker out of retirement to become Army chief of staff. [They were] able to move personnel from noncombat to combat units, enabling them with additional reorganization to create 15 newly restructured combat brigades.

Also, because of Mr. Rumsfeld's plan, our military is more flexible, more agile and better able to fight unconventional enemies. ...

Moreover, he was able to move military personnel out of jobs that should be and are now held by civilians. Under this reorganization, Army troop levels increased (by

30,000), as did the number of combat brigades, making a fact unnecessary despite some critics' claims that one was imminent.

At the same time, Mr. Rumsfeld directed the global war on terrorism through the Special Operations Command. The effort has helped other countries hunt down, capture or kill terrorists in dozens of countries. The combined effort has resulted in three-fourths of al-Qaida's senior leadership being killed or captured, while the organization's mastermind, Osama bin Laden, remains a powerless international figure.

Finally, there is Iraq. The military performed brilliantly in the 23-day campaign led by Gen. Tommy Franks that defeated the dangerous Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein.

Today, Mr. Rumsfeld is working closely with the ambassador to Iraq, John D. Negroponte, to help create an interim government, build up the Iraqi military and help Iraqis regain control over their own country.

Yet Mr. Rumsfeld is a target for those who either oppose American military involvement in Iraq or lack the ability to understand or communicate the difficulty and the importance of defeating the insurgency and creating a stable elected government.

Mr. Rumsfeld, standing on his remarkable record of achievement, is far too effective a defense secretary for any serious student of recent American history to think that he should be replaced. With Mr. Rumsfeld at the helm, the U.S. military has defeated two terrorist regimes, giving more than 50 million people a chance at freedom. ...

[T]he most compelling reason to keep Mr. Rumsfeld as secretary of defense may simply be that there has not been another attack on our homeland since Sept. 11.

Mr. Rumsfeld's critics are off the mark. The military, under Mr. Rumsfeld's leadership, is our finest example of what works.

Newt Gingrich, a Georgia Republican, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from 1985 to 1999. This column first appeared in The (Baltimore) Sun.

Gingrich

## Mallard Fillmore



The Democrats:  
"I RESOLVE  
TO GET TO KNOW  
FOLKS IN THAT  
'HEARTLAND' PLACE...  
THAT'S ALL I  
NEED TO DO,  
AND I'LL GO FAR..."



BY BRUCE TINSLEY







Fox Trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



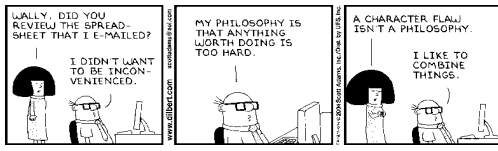
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



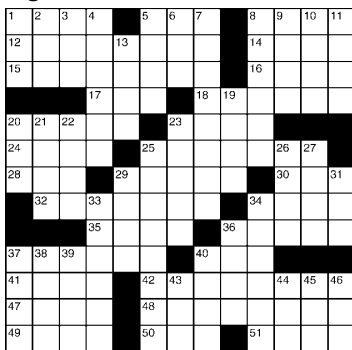
Hagar



Garfield



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



### Across

- 1 Count
- 5 counterpart
- 8 "Friends" role
- 12 Price-list
- 14 Large show
- 15 Adam Sandler
- 16 incubator noise
- 17 "Today" rival, for short
- 18 Begin
- 20 Actor Milo
- 23 A couple of cups
- 24 Slaughter of baseball
- 25 "So what?"
- 28 Scoot
- 29 Mehlthabel's pal
- 30 Trot
- 32 Sasquatch
- 34 Surfboard support
- 35 Kate Hudson's mom
- 36 Spot on TV?
- 37 Spiritually revived
- 40 DE rival
- 41 Bird, to Brutus
- 42 Kid's riding toy
- 47 Get it off your chest
- 48 Colorless liqueur
- 49 Remnants
- 50 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 51 Read bar codes

### Down

- 1 "Chicago" lyricist
- 2 "The Greatest"
- 3 Bad hairpiece
- 4 Silts
- 5 Last several notes
- 6 Physique
- 7 Ceiling feature
- 8 Character
- 9 The yoke's on them
- 10 Detail, briefly
- 11 Ex-frosh
- 13 Crimson Tide
- 19 Mayberry
- 20 "— the ramparts ..."
- 21 Ignore intentionally
- 22 Hagar the Horrible's daughter
- 23 Actress Molly
- 25 Take lunch to work
- 26 Trojan War hero
- 27 Get a bang out of
- 29 Way off
- 31 Solidify
- 33 Ibsen play
- 34 Desires
- 36 Church array
- 37 Carry on
- 38 Bump-free
- 39 Predicament
- 40 Not "fer"
- 43 Chemical suffix
- 44 "The list goes on"
- 45 Greek vowel
- 46 Author Deighton

### Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	A	L	I	M	I	T	T	B	A	G
E	L	U	L	I	O	W	A	E	M	U
C	A	T	O	S	T	O	P	A	M	A
K	I	E	V	T	A	B	P	R	O	M
				E	Y	E	I	M	A	
P	R	O	P	E	R	T	O	R	R	I
R	E	R	A	N			V	I	O	L
E	X	E	R	T	S		L	I	S	T
				I	L	L	Y	E	T	
P	L	U	S		A	N	N	E	D	N
R	I	M		F	L	E	X		X	R
A	M	P		L	O	R	E		A	O
Y	E	S		A	M	O	S		S	P

### 12-27

### CRYPTOQUIP

R H F A Q ' E X I X D D R K M  
O Z E R I V N U I V E X X I . F A Q  
N R M Z V V E F U K B M X V

FAQEIXDH UDD IGEQOXB QG.

**Saturday's Cryptoquip:** I KEEF FAILING TO DIG A GOOD TRENCH, SO I'M PLANNING TO MAKE A LAST-DITCH EFFORT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals L







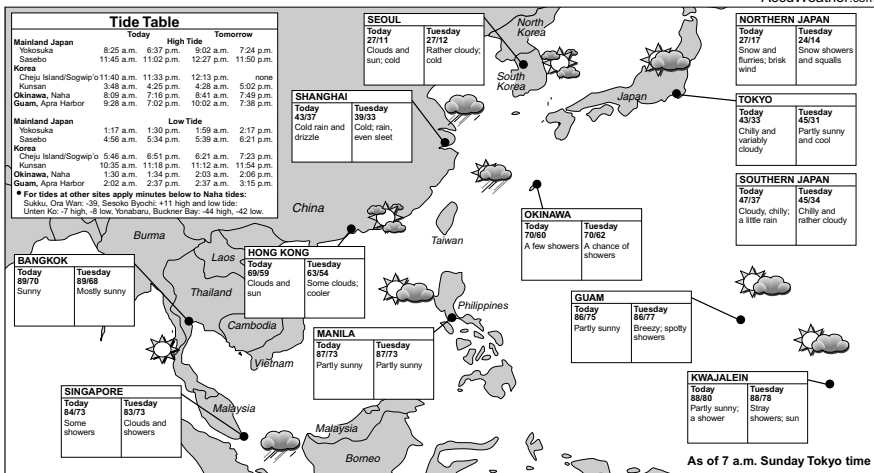




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## The Pacific Forecast



## Extended Forecasts

## TOKYO

Wednesday: Snow, high 42, low 32. Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 46, low 37.

## KADENA

Wednesday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 70, low 58. Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 68, low 56.

## SEOUL

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, high 27, low 10. Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 24, low 4.

## MANILA

Wednesday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 85, low 73. Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 85, low 73.

## HAGATNA

Wednesday: Partly sunny, high 88, low 77. Thursday: Showers, high 87, low 77.

## Saturday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	47/26	Los Angeles	68/46
Amarillo	47/26	Little Rock	42/22
Anchorage	16/6	Louisville	28/19
Asheville	39/24	Miami	81/64
Baltimore	34/19	Milwaukee	18/13
Birmingham	47/25	Nashville	35/21
Bismarck	20/8	New York	34/22
Boise	40/28	Omaha	41/16
Boston	34/23	Orlando	62/54
Brownsville	52/32	Philadelphia	33/22
Buffalo	17/12	Phoenix	65/40
Burlington	23/3	Pittsburgh	22/12
Charleston, SC	44/32	Portland, OR	47/38
Charlotte	41/26	Portland, ME	31/14
Cleveland	18/10	Salt Lake City	39/23
Columbus, OH	23/14	St. Louis	36/23
Duluth	11/4	San Antonio	52/29
El Paso	47/24	San Diego	64/45
Hartford	32/16	San Juan	85/72
Helena	41/20	Tampa	60/50
Indianapolis	17/15	Tulsa	46/29
Jacksonville	46/40	Washington	34/22
Kansas City	41/24	Wichita	48/26

## Monday, December 27



## U.S. Extended Forecast

Cold air will have a difficult time vacating the Northeast from Monday through Wednesday, but temperatures will gradually become more seasonable. Snow is possible along the East Coast to start the day Monday, and a weak Alberta Clipper may drop some scattered snow and flurries Tuesday and early Wednesday. Most areas will receive little accumulation, except around the Great Lakes region. Temperatures will become very warm across the western Plains, but cold, moist air will remain entrenched across the western half of the country. Some heavy snow is possible in the Rockies and Sierra especially on Tuesday and Wednesday.

## Monday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	88/70	Sasebo NB	27/17
Beijing	28/12	Sapporo	27/17
Camp Casey	28/12	Seoul	27/11
Christchurch	64/47	Shanghai	43/37
Diego Garcia	88/75	Singapore	84/73
Hagatna	86/75	Sydney	81/49
Hanoi	72/59	Taegu	39/23
Hong Kong	69/59	Taipei	66/59
Honolulu	80/67	Tokyo	43/33
		Pusan	32/29

## Monday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	84/69	Budapest	47/34	Kabul	64/56
Athens	63/50	Buenos Aires	80/61	Kiev	43/36
Auckland	69/56	Cairo	73/54	Kuwait	63/41
Baghdad	64/39	Cancun	72/58	London	41/38
Barbados	85/70	Cape Town	76/56	Madrid	39/22
Barcelona	37/30	Geneva	28/24	Mexico City	81/68
Berlin	40/30	Istanbul	59/48	Montreal	9/5
Bermuda	68/52	Jerusalem	63/45	Mogadishu	91/75
Brussels	37/28	Johnsburg	65/59	Moscow	30/22
				Warsaw	46/36



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# Rapid rise for UConn since switch to I-A

## Meeting with Toledo in Motor City latest stop on short road to success

BY JEMELE HILL

Detroit Free Press

**DETROIT** — As their plane descended to Detroit Metro Airport, they could see it lit up and blinking at them from underneath the clouds: U-C-O-N-N.

The Connecticut football players were already excited, but this sent them to another level. The name was emblazoned on the team's hotel, the Dearborn Hyatt Regency.

"It was sweet," senior quarterback Dan Orlovsky said. "I wonder what they do if you're at the Sugar Bowl?"

Other Motor City Bowl teams might embrace playing in Detroit in December like they would the Fiesta Bowl.

Even if the bowl were in Iceland or a foot of snow fell today, nothing could spoil the first bowl trip in Connecticut's history. The Huskies play Toledo on Monday at Ford Field.

Four years ago, the Huskies were 2-9 and in the midst of a difficult transition to Division I-A from Division I-AA. Thoughts of a bowl game were far away.

"A lot of teams have played in bowl games and they take it for granted," Orlovsky said. "That's what Coach Costello is trying to stress. Don't take anything for granted. It's a privilege to be here."

He is ecstatic to be here. It's our first bowl game and our first time playing in a postseason game. We didn't care where we went. We just wanted to go somewhere and we were lucky enough to come to Detroit.

When Orlovsky committed to UConn over Virginia and Purdue, everybody thought he was crazy — even his own father.

But Orlovsky saw big-time football on the rise at UConn, a university known almost exclusively for its college basketball teams. Now committing to the Huskies isn't so strange anymore.

The Huskies opened the 40,000-seat, \$91 million Rentschler Field this season. It's about a half-hour from UConn's Storrs campus, but it's a serious upgrade from Memorial Stadium, which sat only 16,200.

"It was high school," Orlovsky said. "That's no knock on the stadium. It was a great stadium, but it wasn't a I-A stadium."

In 2006, UConn will unveil the Burton Family Football Center and the Mark R. Shenkman Training Center — connected \$42 million state-of-the-art facilities that include a 120-yard playing surface and an 18,000-square-foot strength and conditioning area. It also was made possible because of \$2.5 million donations from prominent alumni Mark R. Shenkman and Robert Burton, whose son Michael captained the 1999 UConn football team.

Things have moved just as fast for the Huskies on the field, too. The Huskies lost 12 of their first 17 games after moving up to I-A.

They have gone 22-16 since, including a 7-4 record this season. They finished 3-3 in the Big East. There were several program-building victories along the way, including a 29-17 defeat of



Connecticut quarterback Dan Orlovsky is among the 11 senior starters who have led the team to its first bowl bid.

Big East champion Pittsburgh. The Panthers are playing in the Fiesta Bowl, a Bowl Championship Series game, leading the Huskies to believe even bigger things loom in their future.

"It's one of those things where if I don't say it's a surprise, they'll say you don't set your expectations high enough," coach Randy Edsall said. "I think it's a surprise to everybody. We're in a bowl game in three years. There are some teams that haven't gone to a bowl game in decades. It could probably be a surprise, but when you look at the makeup of this team, the coaching staff and what we've tried to do, then I don't think it's surprising."

Until now, the football team has felt like the odd man out within

UConn's big-time sports community. The women's basketball team has won four national titles since the Huskies began the transition to Division I-A. Last April, both the men's and women's team won national titles, the first time a school has won both the same year.

Though this berth in the Motor City Bowl doesn't match that success, the football team no longer feels like the nobody on campus.

Edsall believes it's only a matter of time before the team begins contributing to UConn's championship tradition.

"It's been a monumental ride and a monumental experience to get here this quickly," Edsall said. "A lot of us in our wildest dreams never thought this could happen."

# Big Ten asks NCAA to OK instant replay for I-A football

BY NANCY ARMOUR  
The Associated Press

**CHICAGO** The Big Ten's experiment with instant replay went so well the conference is asking the NCAA to approve its use on a permanent basis for all of Division I-A.

The Big Ten hopes its proposal will be heard by the NCAA Football Rules Committee at its February meeting. If instant replay can't be approved for widespread use in time for next season, the Big Ten is also asking the NCAA for a one-year extension for its system, and to allow other conferences to experiment with it in 2005.

"It's our understanding that the request for more permanent change may require a more lengthy process of review in the NCAA governance system," Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany said Thursday.

The NCAA gave the Big Ten permission to experiment with instant replay for all of its televised games at conference stadiums last season. Under the Big Ten's system, a technical adviser watched the game from the press box and notified officials on the field via pager if he saw something questionable. Play was halted while the adviser reviewed the call using video from the television feed.

Calls could be overturned only if there was "indisputable video evidence," and only calls like scoring plays, pass plays and number plays were eligible for review. Hard fouls such as blocks in the back and facemasks, and some other judgment calls like false starts were not eligible for review.

The Big Ten said replay was used in 28 of the 57 games last season. Of the 43 calls questioned, 21 were overturned.

# College football's B-movie horror classic: The BCS Lives!

**W**e're at that point in college football's annual B-movie horror classic when the monster staggers back to its feet for the umpteenth time.

It's already been shot, stabbed and electrocuted, folded, mutilated and spindled, drowned, fricasseed and, most recently, flattened by a steamroller. But in the next moment, with the monster rising to its full height yet again, comes the awful realization: The BCS lives! Dr. Frankenstein had nothing on the suits who brought the Bowl Championship Series to life. Like his creation, theirs also was a bad idea that's only gotten worse over time. It has turned college presidents into hypocrites, forced coaches to become beggars and turned off more fans than anything since Roseanne Barr put on a football uniform for the movie "Backfield in Motion."

But the BCS isn't going anywhere. Bloodied but unbowed by the news this week that The Associated Press would not allow its

Jim Litke



poll to be used in determining the rankings. Big East commissioner and former BCS boss Mike Trangese promised yet another reincarnation after the organization meets in April.

"The BCS is here and it's going to continue. But the BCS is a target for all the plaintiff attorneys. When something like this happens, they jump on it. They look at something like this as a crack. They don't understand the strong protection of our presidents," he said.

Trangese is right about that last point. A playoff system could incorporate the major bowls and bring in more money for everyone involved and is favored by a majority of the coaches, players and fans.

The real reason the college presidents won't go along is simple: They want to protect the six major conferences, four bowls and the TV network that control the BCS and decide how to divvy up the take. But the reason they offer is that a playoff would harm their student-athletes' chances at academic success. Please. Even an old-school authority like Penn State coach Joe Paterno isn't buying that line anymore.

"I think the college presidents allowing the BCS this is a real, real shame," he said recently. "Whenever the time turns to having some kind of a playoff, they say you can't miss classes and yet we've already got NCAA playoffs (in every other college sport) and everything else."

"I mean, who's kidding who?" Paterno added. "They've got to try to figure out a way to get rid of it and the hypocrisy of money, money, money."

It's small consolation, but the BCS is already hard at work — not at legislating itself out of exist-

ence, or ending the hypocrisy, mind you, but on the "money, money, money" part. The organization just signed a four-year deal worth \$320 million with Fox for the broadcast rights to the Fiesta, Orange and Sugar bowls from 2007-10 and the national title game from 2007-09. And credibility has never been high on the BCS' to-do list.

Never mind that the AP poll comprised one-third of the formula the BCS used to draw up this season's rankings — the coaches' poll and six computers made up the remaining two-thirds — or that the writers and broadcasters were the only ones who made their votes public. The coaches, many of whom have contracts triggering handsome bonuses for appearances in BCS bowls — have already indicated a willingness to stay on, and keeping the computers in the fold won't require anything more than a steady supply of electricity.

"We're just going to have to put our heads together," Trangese

said, "and come up with an alternative way of picking the teams for the bowl games."

Small wonder Trangese was undaunted. Since they hijacked the postseason in 1998, the BCS and its old-boy network have had to revise the formula four times and the front-running scheme for alternative No. 5 is creation of a selection committee, similar to the one used for the NCAA's basketball tournament. The major difference, of course, is that after the basketball committee finishes seeding the teams, the championship is decided on the court.

The BCS won't go that far in reforming the system. And short of a playoff, it will never resolve the underlying flaw inherent in trying to seed a two-team tournament any time there are three or more deserving contenders. But at least the monster will look different.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org

# Rivals as Steelers, Ravens surprisingly silent

Typical trash talk nonexistent as foes focus on 'The Game'

BY ALAN ROBINSON  
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The pregame talk was usually subdued for two teams that normally love nothing better than to chatter about each other. Maybe it's because the importance of this game speaks for itself.

For the first time since the former Cleveland Browns moved to Baltimore for the 1996 season, the Ravens met their biggest rivals Sunday in a late-December game that truly matters. As Ravens coach Brian Billick said, every Ravens-Steelers game means something no matter the time or the setting, but what's at stake in this game is evident.

For the Ravens, it could mean their entire season. For the Steelers, it could mean their entire postseason.

That's why, even though the Steelers effectively secured a playoff spot weeks ago, running back Jerome Bettis said, "This is The Game. This is our biggest game of the season."

The Ravens (8-6) are one of four teams tied for the AFC's last wild-card spot and badly need to win after losing three of four.

The Steelers (13-1) locked up the AFC North on Dec. 12, but can secure a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs by running their franchise-record winning streak to 13 games.

And what better way to get that than by beating the Ravens? wide receiver Hines Ward asked.

The Ravens have incentives beyond the obvious, most notably to beat the team that dealt them their only defeat, 30-13 on Sept. 19.

Quarterback Tommy Maddox injured an elbow early in the third quarter with the Ravens up big, forcing rookie Ben Roethlis-



NEWSDAY/PT

**Antwan Randle El of the Steelers scores a touchdown against the New York Giants on Dec. 18. The Steelers take on rival Baltimore with a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs at stake. The Ravens need a win to help secure a berth.**

berger to take over. No other Steelers QB has taken a snap in the 12 games — and 12 victories — that have followed.

"It's a total different makeup of this team from the first time we played them to now," Ward said. "So we're looking forward to it."

Not surprisingly, so are the Ravens, who have beaten Pittsburgh two straight. Roethlisberger seemingly plays with an "S" on his chest, enjoying the best record of any NFL rookie quarterback ever, yet the Ravens think they've got the answer.

"We're Pittsburgh's Kryptonite," Terrell Suggs said. "Some teams just can't beat us: Pittsburgh, Denver, Jacksonville. I'm not afraid of their offense one bit."

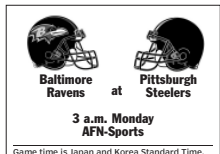
The Steelers did win four in a row without scoring a touchdown in 19 games in any game from Nov. 21-Dec. 12, but Roethlis-

berger passed for a career-high 316 yards while leading his fourth final-quarter comeback victory in 12 starts Dec. 18 against the Giants.

Despite Suggs' words, the teams' pregame banter never became all that heated. Steelers receiver Plaxico Burress suggests neither team wants to give the other any more incentive.

"I would pretty much say it's a rivalry of hate," said Burress, who hopes to play after missing four games with a sore hamstring. "I don't think there are too many friends on either sideline. They don't like us and we don't like them. Their fans don't like us and our fans don't like them."

Not even Ravens coach Brian Billick could bait Steelers linebacker Joey Porter into accelerating his normally volubrious word count. Porter angered the Ravens by showing a wobbly, defenseless Todd Heap



during the Sept. 19 game, and Heap missed nine games with a badly sprained ankle.

Heap was already injured at the time. "That was what it was, and I don't know that our guys are particularly focused on it. The fact that Todd Heap missed the ensuing 10 weeks or so, I don't know that anybody has dwelled on that," Billick said, his words tinged with sarcasm.

Normally, Porter would respond with some pointed words, but was low-key this time — perhaps because Steelers coach Bill Cowher said Porter often becomes too distracted by events other than the game.

"I'm just concentrating on getting this game won because it's a game we definitely need to win," said Porter, one of the Steelers' AFC-high six Pro Bowl picks. "The sideline stuff is way behind me. If they're still mad about the Todd Heap thing, that's something they can deal with."

What Steelers are dealing with is a worrisome and ever-growing list of injuries that threaten to leave them short-handed for the playoffs. Running back Duane Staley (hamstring) probably will miss his sixth game in seven weeks, and linebacker Clark Haggans (groin) also won't play. Cornerback Chad Scott (knee) has missed eight games and linebacker Kendall Bell (groin) has played in only two games.

The Ravens aren't entirely healthy, either. Running back Jamal Lewis aggravated an ankle injury while running for 130 yards in a 20-10 loss to Indianapolis, though he is expected to play.

# Huizenga, Dolphins still courting LSU coach Saban

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Miami Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga's private plane was ready to leave Baton Rouge, La., when LSU coach Nick Saban boarded briefly, then got in his car and drove off.

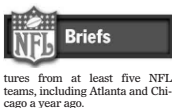
Huizenga returned to South Florida without Saban on Friday, but the coach might yet join the Dolphins.

Still weighing an offer the Dolphins made Wednesday, Saban met with Huizenga and team president Eddie Jones, then huddled with LSU athletic director Skip Bertman, then said he needed more time.

"In the next 24 to 48 hours we'll make a decision," Saban said in a statement released by the school. "We certainly appreciate everyone's support, patience and understanding during this very difficult process."

While the Tigers were scheduled to fly Saturday to Orlando for their Jan. 1 bowl game against Iowa, the question remained whether their coach was headed.

His hesitancy in making the leap to the NFL is nothing new. He previously turned down over-



tures from at least five NFL teams, including Atlanta and Chicago a year ago.

"This is a gut-wrenching decision for Nick," Bertman said in a statement. "He needs, and deserves, the time necessary to make the right decision for him and his family."

Huizenga, a billionaire businessman renowned for his ability to close a deal, arrived in Baton Rouge by private plane at 7 a.m. to make another pitch. He and Jones met with Saban at the coach's house. Saban then went to the athletic department offices to confer for more than two hours with his agent and Bertman.

Emerging from that meeting, Saban offered no hint that he'd made a decision.

It was unclear whether money was part of the negotiations. Saban is the highest-paid coach in college football and in the first year of an \$18.45 million,

seven-year deal, while the Dolphins' offer is believed to exceed \$4 million a year.

The job description is believed to be an issue. Huizenga has offered Saban full authority over the football operation. Because of Huizenga's reputation as a hands-off owner, the Dolphins' job has special appeal even though they're 3-11 — their first losing season since 1988.

But the owner found himself stymied yet again, at least temporarily, in his attempts to upgrade the Dolphins. Last January he hired as senior vice president Dan Marino, who had a change of heart and resigned 22 days later.

Many Miami players lobbied for Huizenga to keep Jim Bates, who is 2-3 since taking over as interim coach. The Dolphins prepared for the possibility that Saban will take over in early January.

With all attention on the coaching search, the Dolphins will play Cleveland on Sunday night — a not-ready-for-prime-time game between last-place teams.

"We're focused," Bates said, "and we're going to play lights out."

## Ex-Raider Robbins arrested

SAN FRANCISCO — Former Pro Bowl center Barret Robbins was arrested Friday for hitting a security guard at a night club.

The ex-A Oakland Raiders lineman was arrested about 7 a.m. after he was told the bar he was trying to enter was closed, according to the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. Robbins was charged with battery and drunk and disorderly conduct. He was still in jail Friday evening, held on \$1,000 bond.

Often troubled, Robbins is best remembered for disappearing the night before the 2003 Super Bowl in San Diego. He spent Super Bowl Sunday in a hospital and later acknowledged that he had stopped taking his medicine for depression and bipolar disorder. The Raiders lost 48-21 to Tampa Bay.

Robbins was released by Oakland in July, a week after he and two other players were fined three game checks for testing positive for the steroid THG.

McGeeha a gametime decision

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. —

Bills running back Willis McGeeha practiced for the first time this week, and his status is unclear for Sunday's game at San Francisco.

McGeeha is listed as questionable after bruising and hyperextending his right knee in Buffalo's win over Cincinnati last Sunday. Coach Mike Mularkey said after Friday's workout that McGeeha's availability will be a game-time decision.

Backup Travis Henry ruled himself out of Sunday's game because of a torn ligament in his right ankle that forced him to miss the last three games.

Third-stringer Shad Williams, an undrafted rookie free agent, is expected to start if McGeeha can't play. Joe Burns, primarily a blocking back, and Dante Brown, whom the Bills acquired Wednesday off Cleveland's practice squad, will step up to replace McGeeha.

McGeeha has started nine games this season, with the Bills going 8-1 in those starts. Buffalo is also undefeated (6-0) when he rushes for 100 yards. McGeeha has helped lead the Bills (8-6) into the thick of the AFC wild-card race after an 0-4 start.

## NFL scoreboard

## American Conference

	East	West	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	12	2	0	0	.857	393	246
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	0	.714	297	206
Buffalo	8	6	0	0	.571	330	248
Philadelphia	3	9	0	0	.250	242	317
American Conference							
x-Indianapolis	13	0	0	0	.786	474	287
Jacksonville	8	6	0	0	.571	248	253
Houston	8	6	0	0	.429	274	317
Tennessee	4	10	0	0	.286	304	383
American Conference							
x-Pittsburgh	13	0	0	0	.929	323	220
Baltimore	8	6	0	0	.571	280	225
Cincinnati	6	8	0	0	.429	313	340
Cleveland	3	11	0	0	.214	247	366
American Conference							
x-San Diego	11	3	0	0	.786	381	262
San Francisco	8	6	0	0	.571	313	274
Kansas City	6	8	0	0	.429	435	381
Oakland	5	9	0	0	.357	254	358

## National Conference

	East	West	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Pittsburgh	13	0	0	0	.929	323	220
N.Y. Giants	5	9	0	0	.357	253	300
Dallas	5	9	0	0	.357	256	307
Washington	5	9	0	0	.357	299	234
National Conference							
x-Atlanta	11	3	0	0	.786	301	283
Carolina	6	8	0	0	.429	300	298
New Orleans	6	8	0	0	.429	301	374
Tampa Bay	5	9	0	0	.357	274	255
National Conference							
x-Green Bay	9	6	0	0	.600	393	366
Minnesota	8	7	0	0	.533	387	374
Detroit	5	9	0	0	.357	258	313
Chicago	4	10	0	0	.286	324	381
National Conference							
Seattle	7	7	0	0	.500	319	326
St. Louis	6	8	0	0	.429	367	356
San Francisco	6	8	0	0	.429	357	251
San Francisco	2	12	0	0	.143	245	390

x-clinched division							
x-clinched conference							
Friday's game							
Green Bay 34, Minnesota 31							
Saturday's games							
Oakland at Kansas City							
Denver at Tennessee							

Sunday's games							
Chicago at Detroit							
San Diego at Indianapolis							
Baltimore at Pittsburgh							
Houston at Jacksonville							
Atlanta at New Orleans							
N.Y. Giants at Cincinnati							
Buffalo at San Francisco							
San Francisco at N.Y. Jets							
Arizona at Seattle							
Washington at Dallas							
Carolina at Tampa Bay							
Cleveland at Miami							

Monday's game							
Philadelphia at St. Louis							
Sunday, Jan. 2							
Detroit at Tennessee							
San Francisco at Baltimore							
Green Bay at Chicago							
N.Y. Jets at St. Louis							
Cleveland at Houston							
Minnesota at Washington							
Pittsburgh at Buffalo							
New Orleans at Carolina							
San Francisco at New England							
Atlanta at Philadelphia							
Atlanta at Seattle							
Tampa Bay at Arizona							
Kansas City at San Diego							
Indianapolis at Denver							
Jacksonville at Oakland							
Dallas at N.Y. Giants							

Friday							
Packers 34, Vikings 31							
Green Bay	0	17	7	10-34			
Minnesota	0	21	0	10-31			

Second Quarter							
Min.—Moss 12 passes from Culpepper (Anderson kick), 14:45.							
GB—Green 1 run (Longwell kick), 6:37.							
Min.—Patterson 68 passes from Culpepper (Anderson kick), 6:15.							
Min.—Patterson 22 passes from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:17.							
Min.—Bennett 38 passes from Culpepper (Anderson kick), 5:28.							

Third Quarter							
Min.—Bennett 42, 0-0.							
GB—Walker 9 passes from Favre (Longwell kick), 7:41.							

Fourth Quarter							
Min.—Green 12, 12-0, 3-11, 0-11.							
GB—Claborn 15 interception return (Anderson kick), 8:18.							
GB—Driver 3 passes from Favre (Longwell kick), 7:39.							
A—Te Riele 42, 0-0.							

Final Regular Season							
First downs	GB	26	Min	25			
Total Net Yards	462	216					
Yards per play	3.4	3.1					
Passing	350	285					
Run—Rushing	117	133					
Punt Returns	5-50	5-152					
Penalties—Yards	14-10	1-15					
Catch-Att Int	30-43-1	16-23-0					
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-15	0-0					
Punts	3-4-4.0	4-9.3					
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0					
Time of Possession	34:13	25:47					

Individual Statistics							
Rushing—Green Bay 19-64, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							

Passing—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Receiving—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Defensive—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Special Teams—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Game Notes—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Final Score—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Game Notes—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Game Notes—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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Game Notes—Green Bay 30-43-1, Denver 12-64, Fisher 12, 1-1, Green 4-26, Chatman 1-6, Bennett 17-92, Culpepper 21, Burleson 3-24, Cleveland 1-4, Te Riele 1-3.							
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# Another comeback for Favre, Pack

## Green Bay rallies past Vikings, clinches NFC North title

BY DAVE CAMPBELL

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — After nearly costing Green Bay a crucial game with one of his familiar mistakes, Brett Favre rallied the Packers to victory — and the NFC North title — with one of his famous comebacks.

Favre led a 76-yard drive to set up Ryan Longwell's game-ending 29-yard field goal in the Packers' 34-31 victory over the Minnesota Vikings on Friday.

"That drive right there — it's sort of what our season's been all about," Favre said. "We've had ups and downs, but we find a way to endure."

The Packers (9-6) trailed 31-24 with 8:18 left after Favre's third-down throw from the end zone was intercepted by Chris Claiborne and returned 15 yards for a touchdown.

The Vikings (8-7), though, couldn't get what they needed from a pass defense that has struggled all season. Donald Driver — who had 11 receptions for 162 yards — made a nifty, falling-down catch of Favre's pass on fourth-and-goal from the 3 to tie it at 31 with 3:34 remaining after an 80-yard drive.

"We needed one more play somewhere, and we just didn't do it," Minnesota center Matt Birk said.

"It's a disappointing loss, but there is a tomorrow and we're still very much in the hunt."

## NFL playoff scenarios

## AFC EAST

New England has clinched division title with 11 wins over O.R. 2 and San Diego-Indianapolis tie.

New England can clinch first-round bye with 11 wins over O.R. 2 and San Diego-Indianapolis tie.

New York Jets can clinch playoff berth with 11 wins over O.R. 2 and San Diego-Indianapolis tie.

Pittsburgh has clinched division title with 11 wins over O.R. 2 and San Diego-Indianapolis tie.

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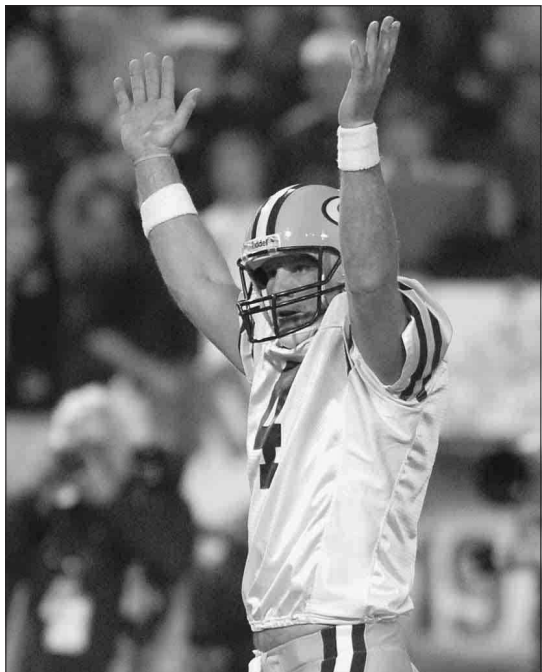
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Green Bay Packers QB Brett Favre (30-for-43, 365 yards, 3 TDs) had an interception returned for a TD in the fourth quarter Friday but led the Packers on an 80-yard drive to tie the game. Green Bay won 34-31.

Minnesota, which can clinch a wild-card playoff spot with a loss by Carolina or St. Louis this week-end, appeared on its way to retaking the lead. But a holding penalty on Birk — the Vikings were flagged nine times for 78 yards — wiped out a 16-yard run by Michael Bennett that would have given them the ball at the Green Bay 40 just before the 2-minute warning.

"When we watch film, we're going to kick ourselves," said Daunte Culpepper, who went 16-for-23 for 285 yards, no turnovers and three touchdowns — on three consecutive passes — in a wild second quarter in which 38 points were scored.

After a punt, Favre got the ball at his 13 with 1:35 left.

Twelve plays later, Longwell's kick sailed through the uprights to give the Packers their third straight division title.

"We're always confident," Driver said. "We knew we could score."

Favre finished 30-for-43 for 365 yards, three touchdowns and the interception. Ahman Green, who left briefly with a head injury, carried 19 times for 64 yards and a score. Javon Walker and Bubba Franks also had receiving touchdowns.

Nate Burleson, who had a career day against the Packers last month, caught two passes for 110 yards and a score. Randy Moss had a touchdown among his two catches and 30 yards, and Bennett finished with a touchdown and 159 total yards on 20 touches.

The game got crazy late in the second quarter. After a 55-yard kickoff return by Kelly Campbell, Culpepper promptly threw a screen pass to Bennett for a 38-yard score to make it 21-14 with 1:08 remaining.

Antonio Chatman answered with a 59-yard kickoff return, giving Longwell a chance to make a

42-yard field goal as the half ended. A livid Vikings coach Mike Tice chucked his clipboard and pencil to the turf when an official clock stoppage for a measurement allowed Green Bay time to gather on fourth-and-1 for the kick with 4 seconds left.

"The three points proved to be the winning margin."

"I didn't quite understand the logic behind giving them a time-out for measurement when the clock was running, they were out of timeouts," Tice said. "What were they measuring for? To go for a first down?"

If the Packers win at Chicago next week — they're 5-2 on the road — they'll secure the No. 3 seed for the playoffs. They're already guaranteed a first-round home game.

"At 1-4, I don't think many people thought we'd win this division," Favre said.

"This team has battled all year, and today was no different."

# Few complaints from coach as Huskies roll on

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Washington Huskies think they're playing their best basketball of the season and they look ready to make a run at the Pac-10 championship.

"We committed 24 turnovers, but after that there's nothing that I can complain about," coach Lorenzo Romar said after the Huskies beat Houston 110-63 on Friday. "I can't think of too many more performances that we've had that we've done a better job through the entire game on both ends of the floor."

Bobbi Jones scored 22 points to lead five Washington players in double figures. Jamaal Williams added 19 points, Tre Simmons and Brandon Roy each scored 16, and Nate Robinson had 11 for the No. 12 Huskies (10-1), who averaged a 15-point loss at Houston last season.

Jones, a starting forward, shot 8-of-9 and led the Huskies with nine rebounds (5 minutes). Roy, a junior swingman who is considered Washington's top all-around player, played in his second game since undergoing knee surgery.

Using an aggressive man-to-man defense, Washington forced 23 turnovers. The Cougars shot only 20-for-64 and missed 19 of 23 three-point attempts.

"We played like veterans

today," Romar said. "You look at the teams that Houston has played and what they've accomplished. They're not a Top 20 team at this point, but they're no walk in the park."

Washington scored 100 points for the third time in four games and won its sixth in a row since losing to No. 13 Gonzaga by 12 points on Dec. 1.

"That was probably our best start defensively," Jones said. "Our confidence is extra high. We had one little slip against Gonzaga, but overall we had a great preseason."

Houston (8-4) was led by Chris Lawson with 18 points and Andre Owens with 17. The frustrated Cougars were whistled for three technical fouls.

After the game, first-year Houston coach Tom Penders criticized the Pac-10 officiating crew. He said the officials allowed the Huskies to hand check with two hands, use their arms on defense and "knock our guys to the floor."

"It's hard to beat five guys, let alone eight," Penders said. "I would love to play them on a neutral floor or in Houston with Conference USA officials or neutral officials. I think we'd beat them."

## Thursday

**No. 20 George Washington 81, Florida International 71:** At Miami, T.J. Thompson hit five of his six three-pointers in the second half and scored 25 points to



Washington's Joel Smith, left, draws a charging foul against Houston's Chris Lawson in the first half of Friday night's game.

lead the Colonials (8-1) to their eighth straight win. Ivan Almonte had 22 points and 13 rebounds for the Golden Panthers (5-8), who hosted a ranked team for the first time since 1997 and dropped to 0-13 against Top 25 teams.

**No. 24 Maryland 82, American 61:** At College Park, Md., John Gilchrist scored 20 points and keyed a 16-0 run that gave the Terrapins (7-2) a 66-48 lead with 6:19 to play.

Jason Thomas had 14 points for the Eagles (5-3), who had a five-game winning streak snapped. Maryland has won 12 straight over American since 1926, when the Eagles won the first game of the series.

**No. 25 Virginia 79, Loyola Marymount 77 (OT):** At Charlottesville, Va., Elaine Williams scored 25 points and J.R. Reynolds made a driving layup with 1.5 seconds remaining in overtime for the Cavaliers (8-1).

Matthew Knight had 27 points for the Lions (7-3).

# Basketball with an old-time feel comes to ESPN

BY JIM O'CONNELL

The Associated Press

If you miss the days when players' shorts really were short and television screens weren't filled with scoreboards and running scores, ESPN Classic is turning back the clock for you.

On Jan. 5, the network will broadcast the first of nine live college basketball games, each featuring "throwback" graphics and production values to make the telecasts appear as they would have years ago.

Jim Simpson, an original ESPN personality, will do the play-by-play with various guest commentators including retired coaches.

The first game — West Virginia at Villanova — will have a late 70s feel to turn the clock back when ESPN was launched. Other eras may be featured in the other telecasts and there could be games with teams in retro uniforms and fans in period-specific dress.

Last night's nine telecasts will be Rutgers at Notre Dame on March 2.

**Bye-bye, bounce:** Stanford players already miss their infamous bouncy floor at Maples Pavilion.

The arena underwent a \$30 million facelift during the past 10 months, and one of many changes included the installation of a new court without the bounce.

Stanford played its first game in the new Maples last weekend, a 72-62 victory over UC Davis.

"Obviously, they did a great job with the place," forward Dan

## College notes

Grumfeld said. "It's a great place. Whatever floor it is, you've got to play. I liked our floor, it was our little thing. But we could play on a carpet and we'd still be playing."

During construction, Stanford practiced in a gym across campus and had trailers that served as a temporary locker room. The Cardinal were scheduled to play their early season home games at nearby Santa Clara University and weren't expected to be back in Maples until January, but the renovation finished ahead of schedule.

The new additions to Maples also include a main scoreboard with video capabilities, new seating in the lower bowl area, an outer concourse, upgraded locker rooms and meeting rooms, and more restrooms and concession stands.

The Cardinal went unbeaten at home last season, when they finished with a 30-2 record and ranked No. 1.

**Bad trips:** Tulsa's 97-44 victory over Prairie View this season was the third-largest margin of victory for the Golden Hurricane in their Reynolds Center.

The second-largest margin was a 69-point victory over Prairie View in 2000. The biggest was a 91-point victory over Prairie View in 1995.

That's three losses for Prairie View in the same building by a combined 213 points.

# Pitt's Krauser wows Richmond

BY ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Not many college basketball coaches spend their entire postgame news conference talking about the opposing team's star. Richmond coach Jerry Wainwright did just that after watching Pittsburgh point guard Carl Krauser.

Krauser scored 31 points, the most by a Pitt player since the school opened its new arena two years ago, and his outside shooting in the second half carried the 10th-ranked Panthers past Richmond 69-60 on Thursday night.

Wainwright jokingly extended an invitation to Krauser to play for the Spiders (4-4) any night Pitt (9-0) isn't scheduled.

"He's a typical New York City kid," Wainwright said. "He'd rather play than practice."

Krauser has rarely played liked this in his previous two seasons, with games of 28 points against Penn State on Dec. 11 and then Thursday's career high in a

three-game span. He came into the game averaging 14.5 points.

"He's one of the top five or six point guards in the country," Wainwright said. "And that's what those guys do. It wasn't a prima donna 30-point game, either. It was a blue-collar game. He left a lot of skin on the floor, going for loose balls."

As Wainwright finished his news conference, Krauser stood in the back of the room. The two shook hands, and Krauser asked, "How can I top that?"

Perhaps with his shooting. Krauser was 6-for-8 on three-pointers as Pitt went 9-for-18 from beyond the arc despite playing without shooting guard Antonio Graves, who sat out with a sprained ankle.

The Panthers were the nation's seventh-worst outside shooting team last season, but are making 12 percent of their three-pointers this season.

"I worked on my shot all summer," Krauser said. "I've got the ability to do a lot of things, and

when I see open shots, I knew I had to knock them down."

Krauser matched the arena record of 31 set by Notre Dame's Matt Carroll in January 2003, and is the first Pitt player to score more than 30 points since Ricardo Green had 33 on Feb. 16, 2000, against Syracuse.

Krauser scored 12 points during a 17-0 run that boosted Pitt's lead to 56-44 with 9:24 to go — including six during as Pitt scored eight straight points in only 33 seconds.

Krauser hit three-pointers on consecutive possessions and was fouled on the second. He missed the free throw, but Chevon Troutman scored off the rebound to put Pitt up 47-38.

"The game turned on those three possessions," Wainwright said.

Richmond, trying for its fourth road upset of a Top 25 team in three seasons under Wainwright, closed to 62-58 with just over 3 minutes remaining. But Krauser made four free throws and Ronald Ramon added two down the stretch to hold off the Spiders.



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# No Round 2 in brawl rematch

## Pistons defeat Pacers without repeat of melee during Nov. 19 game

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Rasheed Wallace suntered off the court and into the exit tunnel, pausing long enough to peel off his headband and hand it to a youngster wearing the rival's colors.

"Just a kid that asked for a headband, wasn't nothing more than that," Wallace said.

It was, however, a lot more than an empty gesture.

On an afternoon when many expected the worst in the first meeting between Indiana and Detroit since their Nov. 19 brawl, peace prevailed — as did the Pistons.

Nobody charged into the stands, nobody tossed any beer, nobody threw punches or chairs.

Instead, the most significant thing anyone hoisted was a three-pointer by Wallace with 90 seconds left that ended the Pacers' hopes in Detroit's 98-93 victory Saturday.

"It was just a regular game, everybody playing the way they play," Pistons center Ben Wallace said. "It wasn't like we were out there intimidated, not wanting to touch anybody because it might start a fight. We were out there to play basketball, and that's the way it should be."

The game went off with barely a harsh word exchanged by the teams, whose previous meeting degenerated into one of the worst melees in the history of U.S. professional sports.

Ben Wallace was booed every time he touched the ball, and fans behind the Detroit bench let loose with a few words of angry-but-clean heckling that the players ignored.

A tarp covered most of the exit tunnel, but it was unnecessary.

The scuffle crowd behaved, and the small contingent of fans who yelled at the Pistons as they walked off the court — none of whom appeared older than 12 — wanted nothing more than a hand slap or a headband.

"I think it was over-hyped," said Reggie Miller, who led Indiana with 24 points. "We knew it was going to be a grind-it-out game for 48 minutes. They did all the little things, and that made the difference."

The only positive for Indiana was the return of Jermaine O'Neal, whose brawl-related suspension was reduced by an arbitrator from 25 games to 15. O'Neal had 21 points, seven rebounds and five blocks, but his poor starts to the first and second halves set the tone on an afternoon when the Pacers too often had to play catch-up.

Richard Hamilton scored 25 points, Chauncey Billups made four three-pointers and scored 20, Tayshaun Prince added 18 and Rasheed Wallace had 16 for the Pistons, who have been having their own problems since the brawl.

The victory moved the defending NBA champions just one game over .500 (13-12) in a sea-



**Detroit Pistons center Ben Wallace, right, is defended by Indiana Pacers forward Jermaine O'Neal during the fourth quarter in Indianapolis on Saturday. O'Neal had 21 points in his first game back from a suspension related to a brawl in the teams' last meeting, but the Pistons won 98-93.**

son that has been defined by the Nov. 19 game against Indiana.

"People realize that was an unfortunate incident and will never happen again, and now we can get back to playing basketball," said Pistons coach Larry Brown, whose disgust had grown during the past five weeks as he continued to be asked about the brawl.

"Closure" was a word being tossed around the Pistons' locker room after they played one of their better all-around games this season against the opponent they knocked out of the Eastern Conference finals in six games.

Many of the Indiana fans were decked out in blue and gold Santa caps, and they booed Ben Wallace — whose shove of Pacers forward Ron Artest set off the sequence of events that led to players fighting with fans in the stands and on the court — even more than they booed Rasheed Wallace, who unleashed a string of expletives at the Indiana fans during last season's playoffs.

Artest remained suspended for the rest of the season. Teammate Stephen Jackson still must serve 14 games of a 30-game penalty.

Players from both teams passed out presents to children before tip-off. The pregame mood was light despite two fans sitting directly behind Brown wearing hockey masks and shoulder pads while waving a sign that read: "Who needs the NHL when the Pacers are playing the Pistons?" Other fans held signs that read "Suspend Stern" and "Indiana Subs vs. Detroit Thugs."

O'Neal missed his first three shots before contesting, but he ended the first half 2-for-9 and then came out and missed his first three attempts of the second half. When Carlisle rested his best players toward the end of the third quarter, Detroit had a 7-0 run and led 69-61 entering the fourth.

"Everybody's happy this game is over. Now we can move on," O'Neal said. "Sometimes when you're so excited, it kind of exhausts you. I think the team, at times, wore out."

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# Suns win again despite lopsided defense

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — No team since Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls has won at their best has gotten off to a better start to a season than the Phoenix Suns.

Amare Stoudemire had 30 points, 11 rebounds and five steals — and Shawn Marion scored 29 points — to lead the Suns to their season-best 10th consecutive victory, 109-102 over the Memphis Grizzlies on Thursday night.

The Suns — winners of nine in a row earlier this season — improved to 23-3, the NBA's best start the Bulls went 41-3 in 1995-96.

Steve Nash had 17 points and 14 assists, and sealed the victory with four free throws in the last 21 seconds. Nash has had at least 10 assists in each of the 10 victories. Only Magic Johnson — in 1986-87 — has managed that feat in NBA history.

But the Suns were not all that happy with their latest performance, especially on defense.

"We're getting a bad habit of playing defense when we want to," coach Mike D'Antoni said. "We need to address that."

D'Antoni thinks the Suns are getting a bit too comfortable because of their impressive record.

"You can see we can get a lot better," he said, "but I like our record so I can't complain too much."

Nash agrees with his coach's concerns. "I think our team should be proud, but I

think they also should see signs of complacency in these. We need to get more focused," he said.

Mike Miller scored 19 of his 22 points in the first half for Memphis, and Jason Williams had 19 of his 21 in the second. Pau Gasol added 19 points for the Grizzlies.

"We had it where we wanted to get it," Miller said. "I missed the big shot and they made the free throws. That's basically it." Down 77-70 with 2:35 left in the third quarter, the Suns called a timeout, then went on a 17-0 run to get up 87-77 on Stoudemire's 17-footer from the baseline with 9:51 left in the game.

Memphis cut it to 103-99 on Williams' three-pointer, followed Gasol's inside hook with 1:53 to go. After Shane Battier missed a three, Stoudemire sank two free throws and Phoenix led 105-99.

Miller's three-pointer, his only basket of the second half, gave the Suns a lead that made it 105-102. Marion's air-ball from three-point range gave the Grizzlies the ball and a chance to tie.

But Miller, who made his first nine shots, threw an air-ball with 24 seconds to go, and Nash clinched it at the line.

Coach Mike Fratello felt a lot better than he did after the Grizzlies' loss at Golden State on Wednesday.

"Overall, for us there's a lot of good. I saw coming out of this game," he said. "It's not a win, but we have to try to build on it."

Phoenix scored the last eight points of the third quarter and the first nine of the fourth. Marion had seven points and Stoudemire six in the decisive surge.

Consecutive stuffs by Stoudemire and

Marion, both on passes from Nash, made it 95-83 with 5:51 to play.

The Grizzlies, playing for the second night in a row, finished their western trip 2-2.

**Spurs 96, Timberwolves 82:** At San Antonio, Mike Ginobili scored 22 points, and San Antonio head Kevin Garnett just won one second-half basket.

The Spurs, who trailed by double digits in the first half, made 11 of their 18 shots in the fourth quarter to break open a tie game. Minnesota, which shot 53 percent in the first half, made only three of 14 shots in the period.

Tim Duncan added 19 points and 10 rebounds for San Antonio, and Tony Parker also scored 19 points.

Wally Szczerbak had 22 for Minnesota, which dropped its fourth straight road game. Garnett scored 15 points on 4-for-16 shooting and had 10 rebounds, while Troy Hudson added 14 points. Michael Olowokandi had 12 rebounds.

**Heat 109, Kings 107:** At Sacramento, Calif., Dwyane Wade hit a three-pointer with 23.4 seconds left, and Shaquille O'Neal blocked Mike Bibby's layup attempt in the closing seconds of Miami's 10th straight victory.

Jones' dramatic shot and O'Neal's defense capped an impressive late rally.

O'Neal, who had 25 points and 10 rebounds despite a bruised left calf, missed two free throws with 10.9 seconds left, but blocked Bibby's ensuing drive to the hoop with about two seconds to play.

Chris Webber's three-pointer at the buzz-



Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade signals "three" after sinking a three-point shot to give the Heat a 109-107 win over the Sacramento Kings in Sacramento, Calif., on Thursday.

er was well short, and Miami extended its longest winning streak since loss in the 1997-98 season.

The Heat became just the third Eastern Conference team to win in Sacramento in 53 games over the last four seasons.

Webber scored 26 points and Bibby had 21 points and eight assists for the short-handed Kings, who nearly beat the East's best despite playing largely without three of their top six players.

## Shaq: Former Laker Jones scores 18 as 'Neal-Bryant battle goes to Heat

SHAQ, FROM BACK PAGE

O'Neal and Bryant acknowledged each other briefly before the opening tipoff.

"It was a general acknowledgment. You recognize your competitor and prepare for battle," Bryant said at halftime. "It was a little weird seeing him in a different uniform."

O'Neal and Bryant were teammates for eight chaotic seasons with the Lakers. Despite their obvious disdain for each other, nearly unbearable at times, the Lakers won three championships and reached the NBA Finals a fourth time during their last five years together.

O'Neal demanded a trade three days after the Lakers were beaten by the Detroit Pistons in the Finals last June. Phil Jackson was told the same day his services as coach were no longer desired.

Bryant, meanwhile signed a seven-year, \$13.64 million contract to stay. With Jackson and O'Neal out of the picture, the Lakers immediately became Kobe's team.

Once the game began, there were few indications Bryant and O'Neal had a past, much less such acrimonious.

Jones, another former Laker, had 18 points and seven rebounds.

Udonis Haslem had 21 points and 11 rebounds for Miami.



Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant (8) shoots over Miami Heat's Shaquille O'Neal on Saturday. Bryant scored a game-high 42 points, but O'Neal's team won.

Odum scored all eight Los Angeles points in overtime and equaled a season high with 24 points. Odum, who came to the Lakers in the O'Neal trade, also had 11 rebounds.

Chuck Atkins had 12 points and seven assists, and Chris Mihm had 11 points and 14 rebounds for the Lakers.

With the game tied at 94, Wade missed two shots in the last 30 seconds of the fourth quarter, sending the game into overtime and drawing a grimace from O'Neal in front of the Miami bench.

A basket by Bryant and a three-pointer by Atkins put the Lakers on top 71-63, matching the largest lead of the game. The Heat went on a 10-2 run to tie it before Bryant made two spectacular shots to finish the third quarter, putting Los Angeles ahead 77-73.

Bryant challenged O'Neal on the first two Los Angeles possessions. O'Neal blocked Bryant's shot the first time, Bryant made a pullup jumper the second.

Bryant made his first three three-point shots, giving him 11 points and the Lakers a 17-9 lead less than 3½ minutes in. Los Angeles was 5-for-5 from three-point range at that stage.

O'Neal was relatively quiet until making two thunderous dunks, giving the Heat a 40-37 lead. The Lakers led 56-54 at halftime.

O'Neal was traded for Odum, Caron Butler and Brian Grant.

Butler, a starter, didn't play against his former team, having been suspended for swinging at New Orleans guard Dan Dickau.

## NBA scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	13	10	.569	0
Boston	12	11	.524	1
Philadelphia	10	13	.435	3
New Jersey	9	16	.360	5

#### Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	12	11	.524	0
Orlando	10	13	.435	2
Washington	10	13	.435	2
Charlotte	7	15	.318	5
Atlanta	6	20	.231	8

#### Southwest Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	17	6	.739	0
Dallas	12	11	.524	5
Phoenix	12	11	.524	5
San Diego	10	13	.435	7

#### Western Conference

#### Northwest Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	15	7	.682	0
Minnesota	15	6	.706	0
Portland	13	12	.520	3
Vancouver	11	14	.439	5

#### Pacific Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	17	3	.849	0
Sacramento	17	4	.810	0
L.A. Lakers	14	12	.538	3
Golden State	10	13	.435	7

#### Thursday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Friday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Saturday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Sunday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Monday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Tuesday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

### Western Conference

#### Northwest Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	15	7	.682	0
Minnesota	15	6	.706	0
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Team	W	L	Pct	GB
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Game	Score
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#### Sunday's games

Game	Score
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Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Monday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Tuesday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Wednesday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Thursday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Friday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

#### Saturday's games

Game	Score
San Antonio 96, Minnesota 82	
Phoenix 109, Memphis 102	
Miami 109, Sacramento 107	

# Ex-Texas manager Oates dies at age 58

The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — After Johnny Oates was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2001, he made a commitment to live each day to its utmost.

Knowing his time was short, motivated Oates to climb out of bed, even if it was just to see squirrels in the backyard or feel the sun warming his face.

Oates died Friday at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center, his wife and brother at his side, his son said. He was 58. "He was very comfortable. He went very peacefully," Andrew Oates, 28, said.

"I have learned more from him in the last three years than I did in the first 25. I think he's accomplished more in the last three years and touched more people in the last three years."

Oates was best known for managing the Texas Rangers to their first three postseason appearances, in 1996, '98 and '99. He resigned early in the 2001 season after the team lost 17 of its first 28 games despite the offseason addition of \$252 million free agent shortstop Alex Rodriguez.

For Oates, the diagnosis of the aggressive tumor glioblastoma multiforme helped him to focus on the things that mattered most to him, primarily his family.

"When you look at it, it's a blessing," he said in a March 2003 interview with The Associated Press at his home near Richmond. "Really there's only one day of the week that has any importance, and that's today. You can't do anything about yesterday and you can't do anything about tomorrow. It's just today."

Oates shared the American League Manager of the Year award with New York's Joe Torre in 1996, and also managed the Baltimore Orioles from 1994-94.

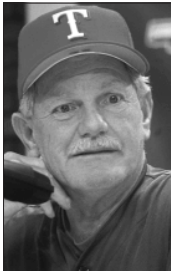
Oates had a regular season record of 797-746 and got his only postseason victory in 10 tries when the Rangers made their playoff debut, winning 6-2 at Yankee Stadium on Oct. 1, 1996. Texas lost the next three games and was swept by the Yankees in 1999.

Oates, a left-handed hitting catcher, played for five teams in his major league career, starting with the Orioles in 1970. For his career, Oates hit .250 with 14 homers and 126 runs batted in.

A funeral was scheduled Tuesday.

## Three more umpires to regain jobs

NEW YORK — Bob Davidson spent last season umpiring in the Class-A Midwest League, where he made just \$13,000. He was on the road from April 4 to Sept. 20 and missed daughter Andrea's graduation from Colorado State.



Johnny Oates

Next year, he's likely to be back in the major leagues, making \$274,993.

Davidson is among three umpires who will be rehired by major league baseball as part of a settlement of the nasty dispute that cost 22 umpires their jobs in 1999. Six more will split \$2.3 million in severance pay.

The umpires will be brought back as part of a new five-year labor contract that was agreed to Wednesday, a deal that also settles the 1½-year old grievance umpires filed over a computer system baseball has used to evaluate plate umpires.

Davidson, a 52-year-old veteran of 18 major league seasons, worked behind the plate in 77 games last season.

Tom Hallion and Ed Hickox, who also have been umpiring in the minors, will get two of the five vacancies. That would increase the number of rehired umpires to 11, half the total who lost their jobs when a mass resignation strategy backfired in September 1999.

Six umpires will receive severance pay and health benefits ranging from \$325,000 to \$400,000. Still to be resolved is back pay for five umpires rehired as part of a partial settlement in 2002. A federal appeals court ruled Gary Darling, Bill Hohn, Larry Poncinio, Larry Vanover and Joe West were entitled to the money, but baseball has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case.

## Vazquez says Yankees would regret trading him

PONCE, Puerto Rico — Javier Vazquez says the New York Yankees would be making a mistake if they trade him.

A proposed three-year deal that would have sent Vazquez to Los Angeles, Randy Johnson from Arizona to the Yankees and Shawn Green from the Dodgers to the Diamondbacks collapsed earlier this week when Los Angeles changed its mind.

"I'm disappointed that the Yankees are talking about trading me for having only a bad second half to the season," Vazquez was quoted as saying in Friday's editions of La Perla del Sur.

"I've had four consistent seasons in the major leagues, and for one bad second half it's unfair that they want to trade me," Vazquez said. "I still trust in my abilities, and if the Yankees trade me, they will regret it."

Vazquez, 28, went 14-9 with a 4.14 ERA. While he made the All-Star team for the first time, he won just one of his last nine regular-season starts.

# Varitek signs with Sox; selected team captain

BY JIMMY GOLEN

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Jason Varitek doesn't expect to hit like Carl Yastrzemski or Jim Rice. When it comes to clubhouse leadership, though, he is every bit their equal.

The Boston Red Sox appointed Varitek their third captain since 1923 after giving their longtime catcher a \$40 million, four-year contract. Varitek did not know of the honor until he was presented with home and road jerseys bearing a red "C" on Friday to formalize the leadership role he has grown into since joining the team in 1997.

"It's not every day you're lucky enough to sign a player who embodies everything you want your franchise to be," general manager Theo Epstein said. "When you select that player, you don't let him get away."

Rice was the last official Red Sox captain, serving from 1985 until he retired in 1989. "Captain Carl" held the role in 1966 and again from 1969 to 1983.

Rice and Yastrzemski were batting stars who earned the honor by virtue of their stardom. Varitek is a potent offensive player, but what sets him apart is his handling of the pitching staff and his presence in the clubhouse.

"I'm extremely honored right now. I don't really know what to say," Varitek said. "If I can do half of what they did statistically, I'll be all right."

Other players have been considered captains informally through the years, like Varitek was until this week.

"We're not asking Jason to change at all by giving him that captaincy," Epstein said. "It's just a recognition of something everybody knows."

Pitcher Tim Lincecum said he knows Varitek's value despite working almost exclusively with backup catcher Doug Mirabeli.

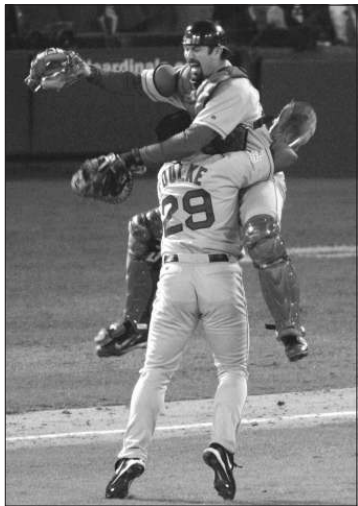
"He's really the guy that holds the whole team together," Wakefield said.

Varitek originally sought a five-year deal worth \$55 million with a no-trade clause that would have guaranteed him the chance to stay in Boston until he was 37. But rather than seek all offers, he told agent Scott Boras to deal with the Red Sox first.

"Jason and (wife) Karen told me specifically that my job is to sit down and talk with Theo," Boras said.

"I honestly couldn't see him playing in another city," Karen Varitek said. "I just don't think he would fit anywhere else."

Varitek is expected to be the last of the free agents signed by the Red Sox, who have already added shortstop Edgar Renteria and pitchers David Wells, Matt Clement, Wade Miller, John Halama and Matt Manteo to the team that won the franchise's first



Catcher Jason Varitek leaps into the arms of reliever Keith Foulke to celebrate Boston's World Series triumph over St. Louis. After helping the Red Sox to their first championship since 1918, Varitek was signed to a four-year, \$40 million contract and was designated team captain.

World Series championship since 1918.

The Red Sox entered the 2004 season with four major players heading for free agency: Pedro Martinez, Nomar Garciaparra, Derek Lowe and Varitek.

Garciaparra was traded to the Chicago Cubs in July, Martinez signed with the New York Mets this month and the Red Sox didn't pursue Lowe as a free agent. That means they will keep just one of the Big Four, but he's the most important one.

"In my mind, he was the guy that we kind of couldn't live without," Epstein said. "There weren't any real alternatives. Jason's kind of the heart and soul of the Red Sox."

The Red Sox had considered re-loading last winter rather than letting the free agents walk and getting nothing in return. But Epstein opted to keep the core together and Boston won its first World Series since 1918.

"The transition worked out as well as it possibly could," Epstein said. "We kept everyone because we thought we had a real chance to win, and that was realized."

Varitek hit a career-high .296 with 18 homers and 73 RBIs last season. Since his trade from Seat-

tle in 1997, he has a .271 batting average with 97 homers and 418 RBIs in 832 games.

"We'll get a \$4 million signing bonus paid over four years and annual salaries of \$9 million. The Red Sox have a policy against no-trade clauses, but the sides came up with a creative compromise."

Varitek will get no-trade rights once he has spent eight continuous years with the team. Four other Red Sox players, including Manny Ramirez, have contracts that entitle them to no-trade clauses that match those of their teammates; none of them would reach that milestone in their current deals.

"We felt that loyalty should be rewarded. That's good policy," Epstein said. "The no-trade clause protection was the most difficult part of the negotiations."

Now that he's signed, Varitek has a busy winter ahead. A studious preparer, he has a half-dozen new pitchers to familiarize himself with: starters Miller, Clement and Wells, swingman Halama and reliever Manteo, with one spot left to be filled.

"The biggest thing is winning. To do it the first year — we all know how long it took," Varitek said. "Hopefully, we have a foundation big enough to do it again."

## SPORTS

Shaq 1,  
Kobe 0O'Neal fouls out of hyped  
showdown with Bryant,  
but Heat beat Lakers in OTBY JOHN NADEL  
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The brick wall came tumbling down Saturday.

But that didn't stop the Miami Heat from beating the Los Angeles Lakers in Shaq vs. Kobe I.

With Shaquille O'Neal watching from the bench after fouling out late in the fourth quarter, Dwane Wade and Eddie Jones scored four points each in overtime and the Heat beat the Lakers 104-102 to extend their winning streak to 11 games, equaling a franchise record.

The Heat survived despite a season-high 42 points by Kobe Bryant. But the Lakers' star was held scoreless in overtime, missing three shots including a three-pointer at the buzzer.

"I knew that it wasn't going to go in," O'Neal said.

O'Neal fouled out with 2:15 left in the fourth period after getting 24 points and 11 rebounds in his much-ballyhooed first game against the Lakers since being traded to the Heat last summer.

O'Neal tied the game by dunking off a missed shot with three minutes left, but picked up his sixth foul 45 seconds later when Bryant drove toward the basket.

"I felt I let them down a little bit, but Flash [Wade] and Eddie

Jones told me they had it," O'Neal said.

Bryant drew O'Neal's fifth foul in similar fashion with 4:04 to play.

When asked last Monday what would happen if Bryant drove the lane, O'Neal replied: "When you've got a Corvette that runs into a brick wall, you know what's going to happen."

The Corvette won, but the Lakers lost.

Wade, who had 29 points and 10 assists, scored with 2:06 remaining to give the Heat a 104-99 lead. The Lakers drew within two points when Lamar Odom made his second three-pointer of the overtime with 1:11 to play.

But neither team scored after that. The Lakers got the ball one final time with 3.4 seconds to play, but Bryant couldn't come through.

A pregame tribute to O'Neal was shown on the videoboard before he was introduced to a standing ovation that lasted about 40 seconds. Bryant stood in front of the Lakers' bench and clapped throughout.

"It was just doing the same things I always do," O'Neal said.

"It was just coming out here getting ready to play and I didn't want to get caught up in the nonsense."

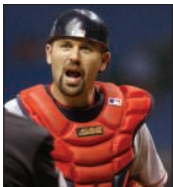
SEE SHAQ ON PAGE 38

Chang finishes career at Hawaii  
as first college quarterback  
with 17,000 yards, Page 32

Miami Heat's Shaquille O'Neal dunks during the first half against the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday in Los Angeles. O'Neal fouled out of his first game against his former team, but the Heat won 104-102 in overtime.

Red Sox  
catcher Varitek  
signs four-year,  
\$40 million deal,  
becomes third  
team captain  
since 1923

Page 39

Ravens, Steelers  
keeping talk  
unusually low-key  
as they prepare  
to square off  
in big game  
on Sunday

Page 34

Favre leads  
Packers back;  
Longwell field goal  
locks up victory  
over Vikings,  
NFC North title

Page 35

No. 12 Huskies roll to lopsided win over Houston

Page 36



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